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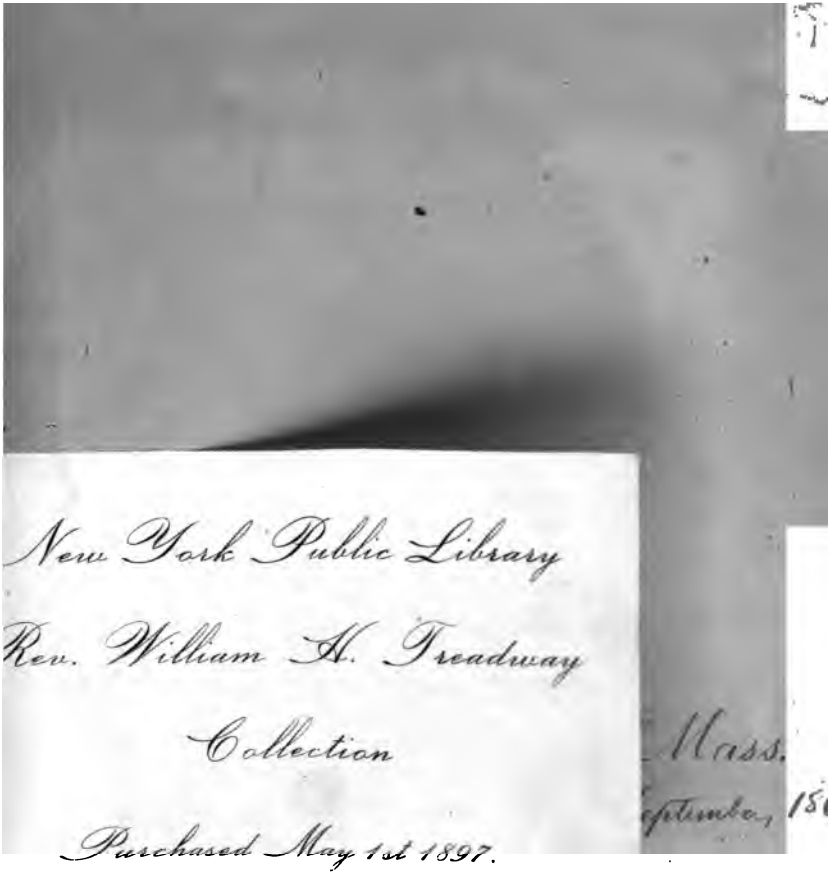
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THE

CHRISTIAN HELPER;

OR,

Gospel Sermons

FOR

CONGREGATIONS AND FAMILIES.

ISSUED BY DIRECTION OF

THE GENERAL CONVENTION OF UNIVERSALISTS.

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EXPLANATORY PREFACE.

MANY Universalist Societies which have a name to live, are wholly destitute of a Gospel Ministry; others exhibit a sort of spasmodic life, by assembling occasionally to listen to a sermon; and others, again, meet statedly once in a fortnight or once in a month, for the purpose of religious instruction and worship.

From some destitute Societies, and from numerous localities where Societies have not been organized, there comes an earnest cry for ministerial help; and in countless families all over the land, (emigrants from the religious circles of a former residence, or converted by reading, or by the voice of a Missionary, or by silent communing with God,) there is a yearning for social worship which appeals to our deepest sympathies.

It cannot be doubted that the demand for Universalist Ministers greatly exceeds the supply; but to avoid all controversy as to the cause or causes of the scarcity, let us speak rather of *the need* than of the demand.

We have not the ministers to send; and even if we *had*, the people could not provide an adequate pecuniary support, nor could the well-to-do sections

of the denomination create a sufficient propagand-fund to meet the deficiency.

No doubt there are many neighborhoods, not at present supplied, in which an able minister would receive a living compensation for untiring service; but disappointments have been so frequent, either as to amount of support or permanency, that men of talent and energy choose rather to accept an established station on pinching terms, if need be, than to hazard a promising experiment.

Even were our clergymen so greatly increased in number as to supply all Societies and neighborhoods in which there is a reasonable hope of adequate support and permanency, there would be need of a thousand more. Societies which, in such a hopeful era, would be worshipping assemblies, statedly, once in four weeks, or once a fortnight, would still be destitute two or three Sundays in each month; and it is a question worth considering, whether such Societies, at the best, would not be "living at a poor dying rate."

We must also consider the countless neighborhoods in which two or three or more Universalist families hunger and thirst for the bread and water of eternal life, as broken and poured by the hand of a Gospel Minister, with no prospect of even occasional gratification.

Often has my heart ached in behalf of worthy people situated as here described. They will not attend upon a ministry which outrages their most

cherished religious convictions, and seldom or never do they enter a sanctuary of worship excepting when a neighbor is carried to "his long home;" and on such occasions they frequently are moved to exclaim, almost in bitterness, "Miserable comforters are ye all!"

Alas for such Universalists when death invades their own domestic circle! In multitudes of cases, either they must bury their dead without word or prayer, or be insulted and mocked in the gloomiest seasons of their experience.

The foregoing is the introduction to certain "Suggestions of Religious Helps," presented to the Pennsylvania Convention of Universalists in June, 1855, and published by request. The details of the plan need not here be repeated. It consisted of two elements: 1. The preparation of a Book of Devotions which might bear the same relation to Universalists that the Book of Common Prayer does to Episcopalians; and 2. The issue of a Series of Sermons, severally dated, designed to be read to destitute Societies, or Christian Circles of sympathizing neighbors and friends, by Laymen who should volunteer or be appointed to that service.

The suggestions referred to were everywhere welcomed with expressions of hearty approval; and at the session of the General Convention in September, 1855, a Committee was appointed to carry the plan

into execution. "Progress" was reported to the session of 1856, and in May, 1857, was published "THE GOSPEL LITURGY: a Prayer Book for Churches, Congregations and Families."

Owing to circumstances which need not here be mentioned, all the labor devolved on the undersigned, as Chairman of the Committee; and he has now the gratification to present "THE CHRISTIAN HELPER: or, Gospel Sermons for Congregations and Families."

Closing prayers supplied by the editor, are indicated by a [*] star. Some of these may be found in the Liturgy above referred to.

I had hoped that the care and attention required in the publication of this book, would be my own sufficient contribution to its pages; but it seemed necessary, at the last, that I should also "stand in my lot" as a preacher. Neither time nor strength allowed me to do more than re-print (with some modifications) the Occasional Discourse delivered before the General Convention in 1838. It is here presented in two parts.

The Sermons in this volume, though severally dated for the specific use aforesaid, contain nothing either local or temporary, but may be ministers of grace and truth wherever (and so long as) there shall be souls that desire or need the enlightenment of Christian Evangelism. A. C. T.

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GOSPEL SERMONS.

WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

BY REV. THOMAS WHITTEMORE. SCRIPTURE LESSON, ACTS XXVI.

Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.—Acts xxvi. 28.

SUCH was the confession of King Agrippa, before whom, and Felix the Governor, together with the chief captains and principal men of Cæsarea, Paul made the remarkable address recorded in the chapter from which the text is taken.

Few persons can fail to be impressed with the sublimity of the scene herein described. To see a man standing alone amidst his enemies, before the high dignitaries of the land, relating with firm voice the story of his life; confessing the sins of his youth; describing his conversion; asserting the great doctrines of his new faith; replying with marked dignity and courtesy to the ejaculation of the governor; turning to the king, with a heart-reaching appeal that nearly brought the monarch to confess himself a Christian; and then the last gush of feeling, "Would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both *almost* and ALTOGETHER such as I am,"—adding, while remembering his ignominy, and probably holding up his chains to the view

of the assembly, "except these bonds,"—forms altogether a picture of the sublimest heroism.

What disappointment must the Jews have felt, who had come down from Jerusalem to accuse him! He had rendered *his* name illustrious; they had covered *themselves* with shame. The decision of the eminent tribunal before which he had been heard, was, "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds;" and Agrippa said, he "might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar." The full effect of these events, upon Agrippa, we are not permitted to know. We can only say, he was almost persuaded to become a Christian.

We now pass to consider the highly important question, *What is it to be a Christian?*

The name Christian, was first given to the disciples at Antioch. Saul had just been converted; and Barnabas hearing of it, sought him, and brought him to that city. "And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."—Acts xi. 26. The public gave them this name with reference to the name of the Master in whom they professed to believe, and whom they served. As we call the followers of Calvin, Calvinists, the followers of Luther, Lutherans, the followers of Arminius, Arminians, so the followers of Christ were called CHRISTIANS.

But what is it to be a Christian? We answer, it is to be a disciple of Christ, a believer in him, and a participant of his spirit.

We fear there are many who profess to be Christians, who have not the qualifications here named.

Some people think they are Christians because they pray often; but prayer is not always the sure mark of a Christian. There may be "a form of godliness without the power thereof." The Scribes and Pharisees, who opposed our Divine Master through all his public ministry, were a very *praying* people; but they were very far from being Christians. "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward."—Matt. vi. 5.

A gloomy countenance is not a sure sign that the person who bears it is a Christian. The Scribes and Pharisees to whom we have already referred, had quite an art of bearing sad countenances; but they were not Christians. "Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward."—Matt. vi. 16. This passage also shows, that men may be very strict in observing fasts, and yet not be Christians. They may also pay tithes of all they possess, and not be Christians.—Luke xviii. 12.

Many suppose they are Christians because they engage earnestly in missionary operations. We can but admire the heroism that leads men and women to leave their native land, and all they hold dear,—father, mother, brothers and sisters,—and go to distant heathen lands, to teach what they conceive to be the doctrines of the Gospel; but it must not be forgotten that zeal for missionary operations is by no means a sure test of the Christian spirit. The

Pharisees whom we have mentioned, compassed sea and land to make proselytes, and they were sometimes successful; but they had not a Christian spirit, neither were their proselytes made any better by the change. "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."—Matt. xxiii. 15.

It is no proof of a Christian spirit for men to be earnest in shutting up the kingdom of heaven. The Pharisees excelled in this work of misanthropy; but they were not Christians. They were the leading opponents of Jesus. Their religion was not a religion of the heart; it was external. They were exceedingly devout outwardly; yet were likened to whited sepulchres, which, notwithstanding their beautiful external appearance, are full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness. All these seeming works of piety men may do, and not be Christians. We ought ever to be on our guard, lest we substitute some outward adornment, or cold, selfish, formal service, for the true Christian spirit and life.

But what then, we ask again, is it to be a Christian? In reply we say, it is to be a disciple, a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. This only provokes another question, namely, how shall we be followers of him? There are two ways: first, by professing a good faith, and second, by cultivating a true practice. The one is as necessary as the other. A man cannot be a Christian without the Christian faith, neither can he be a Christian without the Christian practice. Both are essential.

There have been great errors on these points. Some

persons say, 'Faith is all that is necessary; because he that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved.' Faith, therefore, they think, is essential, and all that is essential. Now, that this cannot be correct, will be evident to every person at a glance. Will you call a man of bad character (whatever his faith may be) a Christian? No man is a Christian who does not lead a Christian life; no man is a Christian who does not pursue a line of Christian conduct. There must be the practice, as well as the faith.

So, on the other hand, there must be the faith as well as the practice. Is a man a Christian merely because he is a good moral man? Certainly not. He may observe many of the points, and even the higher points of morality, and yet *not* be a Christian. Is a good Jew a Christian? No, because he has not a Christian faith. Is the good heathen a Christian? Is the good Mohammedan a Christian? Is the good Deist or Atheist a Christian? Certainly not. Then we see that the faith has something to do with the Christian character. Faith without works will never make a man a Christian, neither will works without faith. We come then to this conclusion: There must be the faith, and there must be the practice.

Having proceeded thus far in our inquiry, we pass to consider what *kind of a faith* a man must have, to make him a Christian. We are now speaking merely of essential faith. The Christian faith embraces many points of doctrine; but we do not say that a man must believe *every one* of them in order to be a Christian. True, it may be desirable for him to believe them all; but we think that a man may be a Christian,

if he believes the *essential* doctrine of the Christian faith. What, then, is it *essential* for a man to believe to be a Christian, and without which he cannot be a Christian?

Look for one moment at the conversion of Saul. He was on his way to Damascus, to seize every Christian whom he could find, and drag him to condemnation and death. A light burst upon him from heaven! He fell to the earth! He heard a voice saying to him in the Hebrew tongue, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Up to this moment he had not been a Christian, nor had he ever sought to be a Christian. "Who art thou, Lord?" he asked; and O what a flood of truth was poured into his mind by the answer, "I AM JESUS whom thou persecutest." Startling annunciation! He sees that Jesus is alive, who he thought was dead. JESUS is in heaven, who he thought was in the grave. He sees that the despised followers of Christ are right, and the Jews are wrong. He sees that Jesus is the Son of God, and he cries out to the being before whom he had fallen, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He has become a Christian in faith and submission. But what does he believe now that he did not believe before? He believes in Jesus; in the resurrection of Jesus. HE BELIEVES THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD; and this, *this* is the essential truth which a man must believe to be a CHRISTIAN.

This fact is shown with equal clearness, in the account which we find in the 8th chapter of Acts, of the conversion of the Ethiopian under the preaching of Philip, one of the disciples of Christ. Philip was directed to fall into company with the man. The

Ethiopian was returning (to Africa probably) from Jerusalem, to which place he had been to worship God,—for although he was not a Jew by birth, he seems to have embraced the Jewish religion by conversion. He was a man of distinction; and as he rode in his chariot, he was diligently engaged in reading the prophecy of Isaiah. As Philip approached, he heard him reading, and knew at once what passage the man was engaged upon. He said, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" He did not seek to frighten the man with any terrors of hell, but desired, if possible, to reach his understanding. To the question whether he understood what he was reading, the Ethiopian said, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" and then requested Philip to get up into the chariot with him, and explain the passage as they rode along. It was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth." Acts viii. 32. The Ethiopian did not seem to know who was referred to. Was it Isaiah himself who was led like a lamb to the slaughter? or was it some other man?

To meet and answer this doubt, Philip commenced to speak. "He began at the same scripture, and *preached unto him* JESUS." Why did he preach Jesus? Because it was Jesus to whom the prophet referred; it was Jesus who was led as a lamb to the slaughter. So far as we can learn from the account, Philip preached *nothing but Jesus.* As they rode along they came to a pool, or stream; and the Ethiopian requested to be baptized, that is, he offered himself to be admitted into the Christian church. Philip said, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest."

He regarded *the faith* to be necessary, and the Ethiopian immediately made a profession of his faith: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." This was the great truth that he had been brought to believe. It was essential; he could not have been a Christian without it. It was sufficient; for the moment he made such a profession of faith, Philip commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

Such is a faithful account of the conversion of a man to Christ. What was the *essential* truth he was brought to believe? It was the great truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He could not have been a Christian without believing this. Although he had not received every Christian doctrine, he had received the cardinal essential fact which made him a Christian, so far as faith could do it, namely, the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Now, if the only fact which it is absolutely necessary for a man to believe, in order that he may be a Christian, is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, then certain doctrines which are now regarded by so-called *evangelical* divines, as essential to the Christian name, and even to salvation hereafter, are not essential in any sense. This may be said, even if those doctrines are *true*, and with greater force if they are *false*.

Some suppose it is essential to the Christian profession that a man shall believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, namely, that God is composed of three persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the same in substance, and equal in power and glory. This strange doctrine is *no* part of the Christian faith, much less an *essential* part of it. Philip required no profession of

that doctrine from the Ethiopian, neither did Paul make any reference to it. We have no doubt that the doctrine is utterly false; but whether true or false, it is not an essential point of the Christian faith.

We may say the same of the doctrine of atonement, in the sense in which it is commonly held by the divines called *evangelical.* These divines maintain that God was filled with wrath towards his creatures on the earth; and that Jesus, by *bearing* the storm in his own person, saved the sinner. This doctrine, whether true or false, is not an essential doctrine of Christianity. It formed no part of the profession of the Ethiopian, or of Saul, or of any other Christian convert named in the Bible. If it was not essential in the days of the Apostles, it is not essential now. For ourself, we believe the doctrine is radically false, and an impediment in the way of the atonement, *in the true sense.* God did not *hate* the world before Jesus *died:* Jesus did *not* die to satisfy the wrath of God. Such doctrines are false, radically false and pernicious. On the contrary, God is Love; and a poet has truly declared that

> "Mercy is the central sun,
> Of all God's glories joined in one."

Hear the language of our Lord himself: "God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His son into the world, to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."—John iii. 16, 17.

Again: The doctrine of endless misery is no part

of the Christian profession. Even if that doctrine were true, it would not be essential to the Christian character or faith. It formed no part of the profession of the Ethiopian, or of Paul on any occasion, or of any other Christian mentioned in the New Testament. If this statement be not true, it may easily be disproved. But it *is* true; and every careful and intelligent reader *knows* it is true. We see, then, that certain doctrines which have been regarded as fundamental points of the Christian religion, have no connection whatever with the Christian faith; but on the contrary, they are false and injurious.

Having described the Christian faith, we turn now to the Christian *practice.* With the Christian faith only, a man will not be a Christian: He must maintain a corresponding life. *What is the Christian life?* It grows out of the faith, like fruit from the tree. The faith therefore must be a *living* faith. "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." James ii. 26. The faith must be sincere, actual, strong, heartfelt. When the Ethiopian proposed to be baptized, Philip said, "If thou believest *with all thy heart*, thou mayest." Philip would not have been satisfied with any weak or superficial faith. He wanted to see in the convert, a faith that should control the whole man,—that should fill *the whole heart.* Our modern questions and sophisms were unknown in the days of the Apostles, and now are shut out by the rule laid down by Philip, just so far as they tend to weaken faith in Christ. We must believe with *all the heart.*—And *what* must we believe?

First, in God. For we cannot believe with all the heart that Jesus is the Son of God, unless we have a strong faith in God. Second, we must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

If we believe, with all the heart, and with a living, active faith, the great truths here mentioned, what will be our conduct? We cannot, in that case, live as if we did not believe these truths. When Jesus opened the eyes of the man who was born blind, that man did not follow such a life afterward as he had followed before. It was impossible that he should. He had been brought out of darkness into marvellous light, and marvellous indeed must have been the light to a man who had never seen anything before. If a man lives such a life, after he professes to be a Christian, as he did before, his profession is not accompanied with strong faith. He doth not believe with *all his heart.* The true Christian believes with all his heart in God, and in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. This is the great truth which his heart receives concerning the Lord Jesus. He does not believe in him merely as a good man, with a pure heart, who preached well, and lived well, and died well; but he regards him as *the* Son of God, the Son of God by *pre-eminence*, the only begotten Son of God, in a sense in which no mere man could claim that title. When Saul began to preach at Damascus, we are told that "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, *that he is the Son of God.*" That was one important way in which the apostles preached Christ.

Is it possible the Christian can live without feeling his obligations to his Father? If he believes, with all his heart, that God is his Father, he will live as a

child of God; and if he does not live as a child of God, he does not believe that God is his Father, let him profess what he may.

So also must he recognize his obligations to the Lord Jesus Christ. If Jesus is the Son of God, he is clothed with *power* and *authority* from the Father, to rule and govern the world in righteousness. We little think how much there is involved in the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, in the distinctive sense. He who believes there was once such a person as Jesus Christ, who lived and taught in Judea, does well; but he who thinks that on that account he is a Christian, makes a great mistake. Could we have had the privilege of following the Ethiopian home, after his conversion, and after his separation from Philip, and could we have known his thoughts and emotions on the way, should we have found him contenting himself in the mere fact that there was once such a person as Jesus? No; the great truth which welled up like a living fountain in his soul, was the truth that Jesus was the Son of God; and he undoubtedly said, "Jesus is henceforth to be my Master: I am henceforth to obey him; to love him; to love his law; to practice his precepts; to imitate his examples; to cherish his spirit; to participate in his hopes: In fact, the life which I shall henceforth 'live in the flesh, I must live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'"—Gal. ii. 20. It must have been so. If the faith exists, it will operate; and if it does not operate, it does not exist. When professed Christians show lives of indifference, and what is worse, when they do outright acts of wickedness, blame not the Christian faith for

it. You might as well blame a man's outer garment for his taking cold, when he had neglected to put it on. It is the *absence* of the true faith which is the cause of men going astray, and therefore the faith is not to be blamed for their departure from the Christian life. Where sin is, Christ is not. "He that committeth sin is of the devil." "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John iii. 8, 9. This is the true theory of the divine life. Just so far as a man commits sin, he is not a Christian; the faith and the practice must agree. If the incorruptible seed of the divine word dwells in his bosom, he cannot sin; and if he sin, he is of the devil. My brethren in Christ, avoid sin, as you would avoid the fangs of a serpent.

But we now advance to consider the positive phase of a Christian's character. He must be like his Master. He must have Christ's spirit. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. viii. 9. He must make the life of Christ the pattern of his own. By setting up this standard, we may prove that there are but few Christians in the world. It were better to make men ashamed of themselves, than to lower the standard of Christian excellence. It were better to have a small church, than by lowering the standard to annihilate the piety there is in the world. Let the life of Christ, then, be the pattern of our own. Jesus, we know, did certain acts in which we cannot imitate him, as his miracles; nor are we required, in this age, to suffer as he did.

The points in which we may imitate Jesus, are such as these: He was humble; he enjoined humility

on others. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matt. xi. 29, 30. In the striking parable of the Pharisee and Publican at the temple, how eloquently is the virtue of humility set forth. The Pharisee boasted, thanking God that he was not like other men,—he was very precise in all the ceremonial duties of his religion, he fasted, he prayed, he paid tithes. The poor, self-abased Publican did not dare do so much as lift his eyes to heaven; but smote upon his breast, and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Which of the two was the better man? Our Lord settled that question when he said, "I tell you this man [the poor publican] went down to his house justified rather than the other."—Luke xviii. 14. So faithfully did Jesus inculcate the virtue of humility.

Jesus was kind, benevolent. Did he ever send away an humble soul in distress? His heart was always open to feel for men. In his parables, how sweetly does he inculcate the virtue of benevolence! He acknowledged works of charity to be of great worth. "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Matt. xxv. 35, 36. Those to whom these words were addressed, knew not that they had administered to the Son of God; but they did it in doing good to men. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me." Let us not claim to be Christians, unless we perform our duties

faithfully to our fellow-creatures, especially to the poor and the suffering. Would we meet the Saviour, let us seek the stranger—let us feed the hungry—let us bring the outcast to our house.

"A poor, way-faring man of grief,
Hath often met me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief,
That I could never answer, Nay.
I had no power to ask his name,
Whither he went, or whence he came,
Yet there was something in his eye,
Which won my love, I knew not why."

That poor man, who sued for relief, was Jesus: for "inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these, ye did it (said Jesus) unto me."

"Then in a moment, to my view,
The stranger started from disguise;
The tokens in his hands I knew!
My Saviour stood before mine eyes!
He spoke, and my poor name he named,—
'Of me thou hast not been ashamed;
These deeds shall thy memorial be,—
Fear not, thou didst it unto me.'"

Here, my brethren, we see one of the most essential of the precepts of Christ; we see clearly what is the nature of "pure and undefiled religion."—James i. 27. If we fall short when judged by this rule, we fall short in the sight of God.

We do not deny that Christians owe duties to God; but let us not forget that our obligations in respect to our fellow men, are the highest we owe to our Maker. He will not acknowledge us to be his friends, if we obey not His precepts, in doing good to our fellow

men. What! say to God that you love Him, while you hate His children! You could not deceive even one of your fellow-creatures by such a hollow pretence. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" 1 John iv. 20. Prayers, and holy speech, and Christian zeal, are all good things; but the greatest of all is charity. Under the superficial tent of ceremonies, if there be not a home for the friendless, a rest for the wanderer, a couch for the sick, a crust for the hungry,—in a word, if there be not compassion for the needy and the suffering, away with the gaudy covering. Devils may be religious, if religion consists merely in outward observances. We love to hear the Christian pray; we love the sweet voice of praise; we love the plaintive cry of penitence; but when we fear they all spring from hypocrisy, they are more like jargon and the screaming of unclean birds. The whole duty of the Christian consists in love to God and love to man; and in the latter, no less than in the former.

We have thus gone through with the consideration of the question, What is it to be a Christian? One word as to the reply of Paul to the confession of Agrippa.

"I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Paul would have had Agrippa, and all the rest who were present, not merely almost, but *altogether* such as he was, except that he would not have had them bound in fetters. "*Altogether* such as I am." He was a man of infirmi-

ties; he did not desire that they should be like him, in this respect; but in his faith, his devotion to Christ, his hope of the resurrection for himself and for all men, he would have had them, not simply *almost*, but ALTOGETHER such as *he* was.

He believed that the evils of the world shall be cured: That sin shall not eternally reign: That the will of the Lord shall be done: That Jesus shall reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet; and that God shall at last be ALL IN ALL.—1 Cor. xv. 28. He believed that the "free gift of eternal life came upon all men,"—Rom. v. 18: That Jews and Gentiles, comprehending the whole body of humanity, shall ALL at last be saved,—Rom. xi. 25–36: That Christ appeared for "the reconciling of the world,"—2 Cor. v. 19: That the Gospel teaches, "in Christ shall all nations be blessed,"—Gal. iii. 8: That all lost intelligences shall at last be gathered in him,—Eph. i. 9, 10: That "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,"—Phil. ii. 10, 11: That "he will reconcile all things unto himself,"—Col. i. 20: That "God will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth,"—1 Tim. ii. 4; and that "all shall know Him, from the least unto the greatest,"—Heb. viii. 11. So did Paul believe, as truly as we may learn his faith from his epistles. There are many persons, who, like Agrippa, are *almost* Christians; but to be ALTOGETHER such as Paul was in faith, we *must* hold to the great truths which we have now submitted.

My friends, I leave the subject with you. May you be built up in the knowledge of the most holy faith of the Son of God.

* LET US PRAY.

FATHER ALMIGHTY, who of Thy great mercy hast lifted upon us the light of Thy countenance, through the revelation of the Redeemer: We praise Thee for the new and living way that leadeth to the heavenly throne, and for the light that hath dawned to guide us into the promised rest. Make us, we beseech Thee, more and more sensible of the blessing thus conferred upon us, that our souls may continually grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

THE FOLD OF CHRIST.

BY REV. E. WINCHESTER REYNOLDS. SCRIPTURE LESSON, JOHN X.

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.—JOHN X. 16.

THERE is great significance in the terms and illustrations employed by our Saviour, to characterize men and set forth the verities of Divine Revelation. One detects a kind of artistic propriety in his comparisons; and the special truth designed to be evolved, stands out from the imagery in graphic distinctness.

There is a peculiar fitness in the term used—in this tenth chapter of John, and elsewhere—to describe mankind at large: They are called SHEEP. Not wolves, nor hyenas, nor dogs, nor anything else descriptive of ferocity or excessive wickedness; but simply *sheep*.

It is true that certain *characters* are described by Christ, under less flattering figures: The Scribes and Pharisees are stigmatized as "serpents," a "generation of vipers." The persecutors of the Christians are portrayed as "wolves." Herod is called a "fox." And Peter—zealous apostle and canonized saint as he is—stands, nevertheless, through all ages, in the holy Gospel, under the odium of that stern rebuke, "Get thee behind me, SATAN!"

But, where mankind are being described in the mass, no such degrading terms are employed. Even

in the famous parable related in the twenty-fifth of Matthew—supposed by many to represent the separation of mankind at the judgment-day—those persons who are placed on the left hand of the Judge, receive no worse appellative than that of *goats*—animals not equal in value, perhaps, to sheep, but similar in appearance and in habits, and by no means adapted to represent utterly ruined and abandoned beings.

This representation of mankind under the figure of sheep, is not an accidental circumstance. It is everyway a felicitous image. Christ is called "the Lamb of God;" and, by characterizing men as sheep, an *affinity of nature* is implied as subsisting between him and humanity. This is the relation which he sustains to us in the Scriptures, as the head of our race—our elder brother—the first-born Son of God.

The application of this term to men implies a positive VALUE in them. It is the *worth* of sheep that induces the shepherd to guard, fold, and preserve them. When one strays, or is decoyed into the wilderness, its value stimulates the shepherd to go in search of it; and, when he finds it, he rejoices over the silly fugitive more than over all the rest that went not astray.

So when men stray from duty, and alienate themselves from God by wicked works, their value in His eyes moves Him to recover them, and "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons."

The sheep lost in the wilderness is none the less a sheep than it was before it strayed; the man alienated from God is none the less a man—that is, he does not lose any of his distinctive attributes; and both the

sheep and the man, therefore, are always *worth recovering.*

There are other points of resemblance between these two objects: Sheep are never *safe* beyond the shepherd's protection. Unlike some other animals, they cannot defend themselves, but must rely upon a stronger power for security. The lion roams the desert, proud of his supremacy, asking no favor of any beast; the tiger dwells in his jungle, a robber by trade, and independent in his calling; and numberless other lords of the animal kingdom, thrive well on their own resources, and swagger through life like Norman Barons.

But sheep do not belong to this favored aristocracy. Left unarmed by nature, they are a timid and dependent class, exposed to many dangers, and greatly beholden to the power and vigilance of their superiors.

To as positive dangers are men exposed, by straying from their Shepherd. They are morally defenceless, without God's help—in danger even from their own hearts—and absolutely dependent on the watchfulness and power of a superior Intelligence.

Nor are these the only points of resemblance: Men are like sheep, with respect to a certain impulsiveness, heedlessness, and want of judgment, perceptible in great popular movements.

In reading history, one is often interested by the spectacle of a whole people darting off, by a common impulse, in a certain direction—that is, embarking, with headlong zeal, in some tremendous social change —following some popular leader, until their strength becomes spent, or until headed off by some impassable

barrier; and then, perhaps, hurrying back again with a like unintelligent impetuosity.

In this kind of action there is an obvious resemblance between men and sheep. Both animals act very much alike under a *crisis*. For, as you see sheep, under the influence of a panic, wait for one bolder than the rest to solve their problem, and bolt after him, heedless of consequences, wherever he may run; so you may see men—urged by a pressing crisis—rush into the very teeth of ruin, perhaps, for no other reason than that their *leader* has started on that course, and the general impulse of the flock is in that direction.

In thus representing mankind under the similitude of sheep, we have the means of estimating the nature and extent of their criminality. We see that sin—in the case of the mass of men—springs from no malignity, or absolute badness of nature; but from infirmity, susceptibility to temptation, folly, and heedless ignorance. Men do not deliberately resolve to be bad—indeed, they often resolve to be otherwise; but they are easily misled—moulded by circumstances—deceived by plausibilities—betrayed by their own conceit—wafted hither and thither by social currents so obscure and silent in their action that one does not perceive the force that sweeps him along. In a word, they are like sheep—impulsive, ignorant, weak, foolish—often in difficulties from which they cannot extricate themselves—but not deliberately wicked.

Having dwelt thus long on the framework of the text, let us now penetrate to its DOCTRINE. "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold," said Christ.

He was addressing the Jews, and, by "this fold," he meant the covenant that contained their nation.

I need not dilate here on the extreme narrowness of the Jewish religion and Jewish character. Theirs was a fold erected for temporary purposes, out of such materials as a rude age could furnish, and intended to be enlarged or superceded, as the exigencies of mankind should require.

The Jews—as backward as mankind usually are in apprehending God's ulterior purposes—made a serious mistake in reference to their national pen. They thought it included the whole sphere of God's earthly providence. They believed that it possessed a permanent monopoly of celestial light and truth. They supposed it to be the largest, completest, most commodious enclosure the Almighty was capable of erecting. That it did not shelter other nations furnished no objection, in their eyes, since it sheltered themselves; for they were not the people on whom its deficiencies pressed.

Still, they received some startling hints of the insufficiency of their fold; for *ten* out of their twelve tribes strayed from it into irreclaimable idolatry; and many others—lured by the wisdom of the speculative East—wandered into the civilizations of the polished heathen, and mingled their sacred traditions with the learning of Egypt and Greece.

But, so exclusive was their Theocracy, and so intolerant their habits and ideas, that, when it was proposed to enlarge their tent and spread forth their curtains, that the Gentiles also might come to their light, and kings to the brightness of their rising—they rejected the proposition with abhorrence. They

would not share the divine blessing with other nations. In vain their Messiah declared, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." They had no patience with any such proclamation of universality. On the very occasion on which these words were spoken, some declared their belief that Christ was possessed of a devil, and they took up stones to enforce the sentiment—so hostile were they to the notion of human equality.

Yet Christ limited his personal ministry to this inhospitable fold; and the Apostles were required to proffer them the first offerings of the New Dispensation—being commanded to visit first, "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

The large and all-comprehending purpose of God —lying folded as a germ in the early stage of gospel history — was not readily discerned by even the immediate followers of Christ. Paul was the first to conceive the liberal idea, and to behold, in all its amplitude, the impartial plan of redemption. He bore the gospel to the heathen; declaring that, as God had made of one blood all nations of men, so He designed to gather them all in Christ.

This was in accordance with what Christ himself had said about having other sheep which he must also bring, that there might be one fold and one shepherd. It was in accordance with the memorable promise to the patriarchs of the Jewish nation, that in the line of their posterity—that is, in Christ—all the nations, families and kindreds of the earth should be blessed. It was in accordance with the general

scope of Hebrew prophecy, which associates with the reign of the Messiah, a state of universal holiness, prosperity and peace.

But, notwithstanding those considerations, Paul's liberality was not immediately seconded by the other Apostles. He seems, indeed, to have lain under their suspicion some fifteen years—during all of which time he labored, apart from his brethren, as a lonely missionary among the Gentile nations. At the end of that period, on reappearing at Jerusalem, he became involved in a controversy with Peter and others, who appear to have held a kind of ecclesiastical council over this buffeted hero, to inquire whether he had not been a little too free with the grace of God among the heathen.

Peter, however, had had his Jewish exclusiveness rebuked by the vision of the sheet, and had ventured to preach to the Gentiles, too; insisting, nevertheless, that Jewish rites should be imposed upon Gentile converts—a step in which he was resisted by Paul, whose better common sense perceived that Christianity could never be compressed into an Israelitish type.

The confession of Peter, on perceiving the full breadth of the Gospel scheme—ordinary and inevitable as it must appear to us—evinces a great advance from the sentiment of Judaism, and cost the first Christians a struggle that no man can now appreciate. "I perceive of a truth that God is no respector of persons; but, in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." Here is the confession of God's universal providence; and, upon this platform, the universal conquest of the Gospel proceeds. Acts x. 34.

Having thus considered the Jewish fold, and seen the first Christians emancipated from its restrictions, let us next look after those "other sheep" which Christ is to bring. The most important inquiry is with respect to the *number* of those sheep. The phraseology of the text, as well as the general course of our remarks hitherto, implies that Christ included all human beings under this term. What is the direct testimony of the scriptures on the subject?

In the beginning of the seventeenth chapter of John, Christ speaks of God having given him "power over all flesh," that he "might give eternal life to as many" as the Father had given him.

Alike conclusive are the familiar declarations of the Saviour, so often quoted: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands. * * All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

In solemn prayer to the Father—having petitioned in behalf of his immediate disciples—he proceeds with these significant words: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; *that they all may be one*, as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE IN US." This is but another method of stating the truth affirmed in the text—namely, the ultimate ingathering of the sheep now scattered abroad, that there may be one fold and one shepherd.

The same idea extends throughout the New Testament. Wherever the object and issue of the Saviour's mission are being delineated, we find a recognition of this cardinal truth. We find it in the declarations of

Christ himself, as already cited,—we find it in the language of Paul concerning God's purpose to gather all things in Christ,—we find it in the assurance that all creatures shall become subjected to him as he is subjected to the Father,—we find it in that imagery which represents him as the head of every man, and the resurrection-type of our perfected humanity.

In a word, we find that the beings whom he proposed to gather into the Gospel Fold, comprised all whom God had created, all who had been sheltered under the wings of Divine Providence, all who had been confided to his redeeming power. Such is the undivided multitude which heavenly grace—in the person of Jesus Christ—goes into the desert of the world to recover and restore.

We have already seen what a conflict there was upon the introduction of the Gospel, between the liberality of the Christian scheme and the exclusiveness of the Jewish religion. It now remains for us to confess that there has been a similar conflict, throughout modern times, *between the Gospel and the Churches*—between the mercy, tolerance, and comprehensiveness of the one, and the cruelty, bigotry, and partiality of the others.

You are all aware that the merciful spirit of Christ did not long survive in the Church he founded. You all know that its peculiar *purpose* was soon lost sight of in local jealousies and dogmatic disputes—in the selfishness and ambition of the bishops, and in the ignorance and barbarism of the laity. You scarcely need to be reminded how, even in the Apostolic age, a Power was gradually invading the Church, infinitely

more characteristic of human infirmity than of divine perfection. The pressure of an idolatrous age from without, and the festering corruption of a dying civilization within, united to stifle the expanded genius of Christianity, and to stultify its moral power. Christendom became endowed with a mongrel character, in which the bigotry of Judaism was blended with the fatal Epicureanism of Idolatry.

At length, as the sceptre of the Church passed into the hand of the Roman pontiff, the spirit of Christ was driven to its innermost recesses, and the truth of Christ was bound in its lowest depths—heavenly captives, waiting the resurrection of happier ages—while human selfishness and bigotry, cursing all who did not acknowledge their authority, parodied and defied the Lord whose mercy they had disavowed.

But Christ had other sheep which were not of that fold. The Romish Church might *ignore*, but could not *destroy*, that fact. She was right in assuming that she belonged to Christ; she did, and so did the Jews; but both were wrong in supposing that their folds contained all the sheep.

Far away in the East was another fold—the GREEK CHURCH—round whose door the wolves of Mohammed howled, and waved their bloody cimeters; and the persecuted flock shivered in the ghastly moonlight, and tremblingly waited for the dawn. *These* belonged to Christ, even on the principle asserted by the Papacy; for they were a lineal branch of apostolic planting, and bore the unction of preserving grace. And shall we deny that the pagans and misbelievers were his, when we read that the "heathen" and the "uttermost parts of the earth," were given him for a

possession; and when he expressly assures us that, being lifted up from the earth, he will draw all men unto himself?

In due time the Reformation came—splitting the Romish Church asunder; and *then*, the dissevered parts began to excommunicate each other—each claiming to be Christ's fold, but denying that title to its adversary.

Meantime, the Protestant Church has gone on *subdividing* itself; and nearly every fractional part wants, or assumes to possess, a monopoly of the grace of God.

Look over Christendom, and see how it is checkered by sectarian lines. Go into the assembly of almost any sect, and hear how all the rest are being reviled. Pitiful assemblies of inhospitable souls, each grouped in its narrow fold; sheathed in dogmatism, like a porcupine in his armor of quills; nourishing its own egotism to the shame of Christian humility, and indicting its neighbors to the reproach of Christian charity;—what would become of them if God were not better than they declare Him? what hope of mercy could they have, if the gospel scheme were not broader than their paltry conceptions of it?

Those who would implicate Christ in so limited a plan of redemption, are under peculiar obligations to Divine goodness for not taking them at their word; for *they* would be the first to be swept away by that fastidious severity which they idolize and exemplify.

It is instructive to observe that those sects whose faith has the least infusion of Christian truth and power, are most inclined to limit the goodness of God and the scope of redemption. Thus, the Catholics—

whose system comprises more of the elements of heathenism than of the gospel, perhaps—are the most *intolerant* of all Christians; maintaining that nobody out of the pale of their Church can be saved.

The Episcopalians—whose system rests upon a similar basis of alleged apostolic succession—are also obliged to be intolerant so far as they adhere to the conditions of their creed; though the large social relations peculiar to this denomination, as well as the irrepressible suggestions of common sense, *counteract* —at least in America—the tendency of their abstract doctrines. Devout believers in what they call the Holy Apostolic Faith, must restrict the salvation by Christ to their own communion, I think; but, so many are drawn into that church by social affinities, or by the charm of the Liturgy, rather than by any belief in its dogmas, that one rarely finds, in practical life, the *bigotry* which is the natural fruit of its formulas.

The other Trinitarian Protestant denominations—as they have more of the democratic spirit of Christianity—extend the pale of salvation around what they call "the evangelical sects," but exclude Unitarians and Universalists. They declare that those who cannot believe, what some have termed "the saving doctrines of the Bible"—such as the Trinity, Vicarious Atonement, Total Depravity, and Endless Punishment—cannot come within the scope of Christian Redemption. An inscrutable arrangement on the part of the Creator, by which He is supposed to endow man with reason, consciousness, and humane sensibilities, and then damn him to all eternity for not believing what is repugnant to these attributes!

The excommunicated sects are not shaken in their equanimity, however, on account of being denied admittance to the "evangelical" fold. They regard those narrow enclosures much as the first Christians doubtless regarded that of Judaism—as being adapted to the condition of those who "limit the Holy One of Israel," but not a congenial sphere for those who have attained to the majesty of the stature of Christ.

It is the privilege of those who stand where Paul stood—on the commanding summit of Christian Faith, and who see that the Gospel Fold gathers all men within its pavilion—to magnify Christ above his dim reflection in the Churches, and to extend the graceful robe of charity over all the naked deformity of sectarism. It is their privilege to know that—while there is an ABSOLUTE TRUTH enthroned at the head of the graduated scale of human experience, to which we must all climb for the sceptre and palm of Christian perfection—all the sects and orders of men are doing some acceptable work on the side of the Lord's mountain, if only as sutlers of the camp or miners of the march—being blended with that undivided host, whose daily movements mark the cycles of the ages.

It imbues the mind with tranquil and reverential faith, to know how grand, magnanimous, and complete are all the purposes of God. It touches the heart with contrition, pity, and love, to feel how infinitely above our own conceits, anticipations, and desires, ranges the reconciling power of Christ. Inanimate, unconscious, God leads His children into life. Ignorant of His presence—ungrateful for His care, every creature is sentineled by His watchful providence. Blinded by the eclipse of evil—walking amid illusions

and dangers—He sends them a Divine Guide, and a Chart of their unknown course. Entangled by irritating rivalries—jealous, angry, turbulent—making His very goodness the occasion of new conflicts, He conducts the nations by a way they know not, changing their darkness into light, and their rancor into love.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

LET US PRAY.

ALMIGHTY GOD, we praise Thee for that abundant Grace which seeks Thy children through all the world, and brings them all to the fold of the great Shepherd, Thy Son. We praise Thee for that immutable Word of Salvation, which nullifies all the distinctions of human pride, casts down all the barriers of sectarian bigotry, and blends in one glorified scene the origin and interests, the duty and destiny, of all mankind.

May our hearts imbibe the Love we recognize in *Thee*, and our lives be characterized by the magnanimous principles and aims, which distinguish our Saviour, in his work of regeneration. So shall the blessed Faith Thou hast imparted to us, blossom into the beauties of Holiness, and ripen into righteous deeds, to the praise of Thy reconciling power, and to the honor of the name of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

VALUE OF PRAYER.

BY REV. JOHN W. HANSEN. SCRIPTURE LESSON, EPHESIANS III.

I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men.—1 TIMOTHY ii. 1.

PRAYER is natural. It is not, like literature, an invention. It was not discovered after a long process of thought. It was born with the first human need: it breathed in the earliest human experience.

It is the language of dependence. When a child lies helplessly in the arms of its protector, the sense of supplication it has, the instinct of weak dependence, is a species of prayer. It is a silent, but imploring and trustful petition, ascending from the infantile to the parental heart.

Such is the character of that prayer which is native in every soul, and which is co-existent with all human life. It springs from a consciousness of dependence on higher power and larger strength: it is trust, faith, confidence, hope, in some Being, who, though unseen, is unconsciously or intelligently worshipped.

Springing thus from human weakness, prayer, like its cause, its source,—is universal. It is found with greater or lesser force wherever man is known. Prayer exists in degree among all men, of every grade of cultivation, and of every variety of character. It is changed in form and intensity by different circumstances, but it is ever present, in all sentient life.

The savage wanderer in the tangled jungles of India—the wild Arab, who looks upward from burning sands, and sees only the wondrous firmament of the East—the tall Patagonian—the dwarfish Esquimeaux—the black son of Africa—the majestic red man of the forests of America—the polished inhabitant of civilized and enlightened lands—educated or ignorant,—it matters not what may be the degree of cultivation, or the station—wherever man is found, this necessity of his being ever attends him. In all the differing circumstances of his changing life, he is a natural worshipper.

"But," it is said, "men worship various objects. One bows before a block of wood or stone, or a molten image, cast into a graceful or an unlovely mould; and another worships heavenly bodies; and another, birds, or beasts, or insects; and yet another, an Invisible Being. And these receive widely different traits from their worshippers. Even the same Invisible Being is worshipped differently by those who pray to Him. One ascribes to Him human passions and frailties; another assigns Him the highest human ideal of perfection. Now if there is really a legitimate object of worship, how does it happen that He is so differently viewed by His petitioners? Why do not men agree in their manner of praying, and in their ideas of God, if prayer be a natural impulse of the soul?"

To this it may be answered, that though the impulse is natural, it is not intelligent. A child entertains a sense of supplication and of veneration, which unitedly constitute prayer; but that instinct does not reveal to it who the parent is: it only declares that there is such an object. When the child exercises

other attributes, it learns to distinguish that parent—or events may conspire to keep it in ignorance of that parent—or, seeing him, the child may not understand his character. The sense of dependence proves that there is an object of dependence, but it does not declare who or what that object is.

So, the veneration of men, who are but "children of a larger growth," and who are exercised by the same emotions toward their Heavenly Father, is a natural impulse, but it does not intelligently decide the character of the Being reverenced. It declares His existence, but not His true nature. He will have different features, according to the cultivation or lack thereof, on the part of the worshipper. Therefore, though the mists of time veil and obscure the exact lineaments of the Supreme Being, they do not hide them. "We see through a glass darkly," but we *do* see: we are not blind. The object of worship is the same; the worship is substantially the same; it springs from the same deep necessity, toward the same Parental Spirit,—but the supposed character of that Spirit depends upon our condition. The general rule is, that men transfer their own spiritual (or at least ideal) being to the Divine.

It forms no objection to the existence of God, that men do not see Him alike. Objects which are universally acknowledged to exist, are viewed in a different light, and seem to present different aspects, when they are really the same.

Think of a star. To the ignorant African, it is at most a spark of fire, whose office it is to light him home when the moon has set: But to the clear eye of wisdom it is a rolling world, coursing its everlast-

ing orbit of beauty, peopled with millions of happy beings. And yet it is the same star they are both looking upon.

Think of a flower. To one—

> "A primrose by the river's brim,
> A yellow primrose is to him,
> But it is nothing more:"—

To another, it is a living thing, full of Divine truth, and wisdom, and beauty, and God proclaims His perfections, in a voice clear and eloquent, from its humble pulpit.

This objection, then, amounts to nothing. If it follows that there is no God, because, though prayer is universal, men differ in their estimate of the nature and character of the supposed Deity,—then it equally follows that there are no flowers and no stars, because men do differ in their theories in reference to these. The most that this objection can do, is to perplex the mind for a brief season; but the soul in its hours of gladness will still look thankfully upward; and when darkness and despondency come, it will continue, as heretofore, to flee unto God, the sure Refuge from the storms of life.

Thus, gratitude for blessings, supplication and thanksgiving—in other words, worship, prayer—are native in every human soul. Though the form and manifestation may differ, it is really the same Being worshipped by Heathen, Mahometan and Christian, and it is prayer that, in each and all, aspires after God and goodness and truth. As intelligence enables us to behold aright all natural objects, it increases our spiritual perceptions, and perfects our worship.

It becomes a question of importance, then, what prayer is most appropriate? What can we hope to achieve for ourselves by adopting a habit of prayer? We *must* pray at times, but in what manner should we "pray without *ceasing?*"

We ought, first of all, to remember that we cannot in the least change or affect the Supreme Being by prayer. Without variableness or even the shadow of turning, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever—elevated beyond all possibility of change, He cannot be flattered by praise, or rendered sorrowful by human sadness, or kindled into wrath by human dereliction, or in any sense become the partisan of any of His creatures.

Well-meaning Christians frequently ask God to come and take sides with them, to fight for them in battle, to cause their crops to grow, and to discharge a variety of offices for them—while others, in other places, are asking for blessings entirely opposite to these. Two nations may pray for possession of the same territory, or two individuals for the same land.

Now, strictly speaking, God does not listen to all these adverse claims, and bestow His favor upon the most importunate petitioner. Men fervently pray for what never was granted, and never *can* be. In a certain sense, however, these petitions are proper and may be answered: Providence aids those who help themselves. If we are true to the laws that govern the kingdom of truth, we shall have churches and converts. If we are oppressed and wronged, so far as we adopt right means to accompany our prayers, God, by the operation of His laws, is fighting for us. If we are industrious, and obey the laws of nature, our lands

will generally be productive, our business will prosper, and our health will be secured.

The philosophy of prayer may be expressed in a few words: God can never be called from the path of His Providence, or swerved from His intentions, or made to suspend or contravene the operation of His laws. As truly as the planets obey the statutes that guide their even motions, and travel in the path they have trodden from eternity, so truly does God pursue the road of Eternal Providence.

"Of what use is it then that we pray?" I answer, that prayer is a golden chain, reaching from the throne of God to the soul of man. By it we cannot bring God down to earth, or engage Him in our plans and purposes; but by its aid we may raise ourselves from the low pursuits of life, its sordid cares, its troubles, its vain perplexities, to a sacred communion with the Invisible Presence. Cherishing the truth of immutability, we have the fullest assurance, when we pray, that we rely on a Being who may not be driven about by human desire or passion. We rely on the everlasting God, and while we cannot hope to change Him (saddest change conceivable!) we know that we can raise ourselves to a communion, a divine oneness with Him. *Prayer never changes God—it changes man.* By supplication we do not bring Him down to *us:* we raise ourselves upward to *Him.*

And yet, in the true sense, "He is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God." Not in the old signification, but in this: All departments of human conduct, all possible circumstances and events, are subject to certain divine laws, and as we obey or disobey them, our prayers are answered, or disregarded. Should we

pray for the earth to cease revolving, and though we should be joined in our petition by the whole of our race, it would not be answered. If we oppress a man, or a nation, and pray for ultimate success in so evil a course, the prayer will not be heard. In fine, should we spend our entire strength in supplicating for the slightest event to occur which is in opposition to eternal law, it will not come to pass.

Now one of these divine laws, is, that our happiness or misery will always be commensurate with our real mental and spiritual condition. If we ask in a right spirit for a blessing, in some sense we shall receive it. The thing itself may not be in harmony with the order of Providence, but as our happiness consists in the frame of mind we are in, and not in the possession of definite blessings, we create that frame of mind by our prayer, and thus the end we sought, in asking for the blessing, is attained, if not the blessing itself. So, if we ask for an evil, in an evil spirit, we receive it in some form. We pray, and according to our frame of mind, our faith, our condition of being, we receive an answer corresponding to the prayer.

The same general remarks may be made in reference to public prayer, to the observance of which we sometimes hear objections. It is said to be useless and unnecessary.

What is the object of public prayer? It is an effort on the part of the speaker to raise his own feelings and emotions, and those of his hearers, to an appropriate tone, before entering upon the consideration of the subject he has in hand. He would call the wandering thoughts of his hearers from the dusty cares of the world. For this purpose, he seeks com-

munion with the Great Spirit of Life. Surely, if argument on any subject, if meditation or thought on any theme, is proper and decorous, what possible objection can be urged here? The sole object of the strains of the organ, of the choir, and of vocal addresses to the Deity, is to inspire thoughts of God, of duty, and of religion. I apprehend that it is the manner in which men attack the throne of God, as by storm, that has excited prejudice against the custom, with some men of correct judgment, and not the simple act itself.

There is one expression in quite general use that should be understood. I allude to the phrase which frequently closes prayer, by asking for blessings "through Jesus Christ." If we mean, by the phrase in question, to ask for blessings in the spirit of Christ, it is well; but if we ask of God, as many do, through Christ, because we think God would not be willing to grant us His favor unless it were for Christ, then we distrust our Father—just as a child would do, who should ask the parental blessing for the sake of an elder brother. Those who ask God to bless them, through the merits of Christ, do so because they do not think Him as kind and benevolent as Christ, and suppose that the Son can prevail on the Father to do what otherwise He would *not*.

This feeling grew out of an erroneous theology. The only sense in which Christianity *allows* the expression, is, that we desire to ask all blessings as did Christ, and *he* always prayed for the will of the Father to be done,—thus acknowledging the infinite and independent wisdom and goodness of the Supreme Being.

But what is the prayer of the Christian believer? The Apostle says, "we know not what we should pray for as we ought;" but he adds, "the spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us, according to the will of God." And in the text he informs us that "prayers, supplications and intercessions, should be made for all men," because God will have all men to be saved, and come into truth and holiness.

Should it be asked, "If all men are to be saved, why pray that they *may* be?" I reply: If it be certain that they cannot and will not be saved, why pray for it? We are commanded to lift up holy hands "without doubting;" and elsewhere we are assured that "whatever is not of faith is sin." Now if this be the manner in which the Christian is to pray—if he must pray without doubting that what he asks will be granted—and if, when he offers this prayer, he must pray that all men may be blessed on earth and in heaven—how can he cherish any religious sentiment less than the sublime thought, that all souls shall at last be brought into union with God? If he prays for all men, as the apostle commands, and has not faith that all shall be blessed, then, as whatever is not of faith is sin, every petition he presents is improper and wrong; and if he *does* believe it, then, and then alone, can he pray in faith.

True Christian prayer is for all men, that they may be happy here and hereafter, as we wish and expect to be ourselves, and it must be offered in full faith, without a shadow of doubt. The moment we ask for what we do not believe will ever be received, that very moment our sacrifice becomes an abomination.

True Christian faith is the substance of things

hoped for; it is a good that we both wish and expect —and as Christian prayers must be offered in Christian faith, they must harmonize with the declarations of the apostle, and ask for the ultimate happiness of all souls, in full confidence that the petition will be granted.

It is a singular fact, that however men may differ in their sentiments, all Christians obey the apostle in one respect: namely, they ask for the grace of God to bless the whole world. A prayer for the truth of a partial creed, was never yet heard from the lips of a Christian.

But while they are thus obedient to Paul, are they equally careful to obey his other command? When they pray for all, do they pray in faith, without doubting? Do they believe in the result which they pray may be verified at the last?

While it is most unreasonable and improper for the Christian to pray, and to persist in praying, for what he believes will never come to pass, such intercession is perfectly consistent in him who believes that "a knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the water covers the sea." He, and he alone, *can* pray for it. Those who cannot believe it may wish for it, and, heart-broken over the loss of friends, may mourn that they cannot believe it; but they must not pray for it, until, by the eye of faith, they can see it fulfilled.

But how useless this direction! The soul *will* and *must* pray for the good of the world, though a cold, intellectual belief may deny the aspiration of the worshipper.

I said at the beginning, that Prayer is a natural

aspiration of the finite being after God. As the soul of the artist yearns for the presence of beauty, and seeks it through music, poetry, painting, sculpture and architecture—and, having in his mind an ideal of the beautiful, the good, and the true, endeavors to realize it in harmony, marble, or building, until the world is delighted with some splendid work of genius,—so the true Christian worshipper, having "Christ formed in him the hope of glory," which constitutes the believer's ideal, endeavors to realize that ideal in life. His prayers aspire toward God, reflected through Christ; and, as he prays, he labors to embody that ideal in deed and in life.

In the true sense of the word, all human beings pray. Prayer is as natural as breath; and we may doubt whether there be a soul in the universe which is not exercised at times by prayer, in some form and degree. The true Christian prays for universal blessings, and he prays in faith, without doubting. He prays without ceasing. He may not be known for the length or frequency of his prayers in public, but he prays without ceasing, by always having in his soul that sense of dependence which manifests itself in gratitude and thanksgiving, or supplication and aspiration.

The command to pray without ceasing, proves that this is the condition of the soul referred to, and not vocal utterance—for we cannot always pray aloud, and such a command would be unreasonable, and impossible to be obeyed. But the command to pray for the world, in faith, without ceasing, is reasonable and just, and one which will secure our highest good, if it be obeyed.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or expressed."

It is a frame of mind, rather than a form of words, and though it may be uttered, is quite as often deeper than words, or human speech. Coleridge has well expressed the nature of prayer:

"Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
It hath not been my use to pray
With moving lips or bended knees,—
But silently, by slow degrees,
My spirit I to love compose,
In humble trust mine eyelids close,
With reverential resignation;
No wish conceived, no thought expressed,
Only a sense of supplication,—
A sense o'er all my soul impressed,
That I am weak, yet not unblessed,
Since in me, round me, everywhere,
Eternal strength and goodness are."

When we go out among the haunts of nature, and seeing the marvellous beauty of creation, rise in thought to the Author of All,—when the beauty of night or day, of ocean or earth, attracts us, and thoughts too big for utterance have crowded the mind—when evidences of God's goodness have been showered into our laps, and gratitude has touched and enlarged the heart,—or when misfortune has crossed our paths, and the sky of life has been filled with sorrow's sombre clouds from horizon to zenith, and we have felt a necessity for aid, and have looked to God in supplication, and our hearts have been raised to Him as on eagles' wings,—then have we prayed. Such times have come to all of us, and we have prayed in spirit and in truth.

It was said of one of the great architects, that as he labored he prayed, and the conscious stone grew in beauty, until it became a petrified prayer,—the embodied aspiration of the builder!

True prayer always is accompanied by work. "Work is worship." He who works earnestly, faithfully, in performing life's duty, must pray well and truly. "He prays best who loves most,"—who is in such a frame of mind that a beautiful life is seen growing daily from a perfect faith, refreshed and encouraged by prayer—a prayer that may ascend from workshop or plough, from ship or church, from land or sea,—from man the weak and finite, to God the Infinite Father of All.

* LET US PRAY.

O THOU that hearest prayer! unto Thee shall all flesh come. Thou art ever pleading with all souls to confide in Thee, and live; and by the bands of love Thou wilt yet draw all Thine offspring into fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Father, that we who have meditated Thy gracious purpose, may continually come nigh unto Thee in supplication, intercession and thanksgiving, and feel the joy and communion of the kingdom of heaven, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ *Amen.*

UNIVERSALISM OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY REV. I. D WILLIAMSON, D. D. SCRIPTURE LESSON, I JOHN IV.

For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.—ROMANS xi. 32.

I DO NOT purpose to detain you with any labored exposition of the text. It is a tolerably clear and definite assertion, that the mercy of God is not measured by human faith, nor bounded by the unbelief of man, but that it flows out to those who believe not, as well as to those who believe. It therefore indicates a great principle of the Divine government, and I employ it, as opening the way to a discussion of what I shall take leave to call, "The Universalism of Christianity."

I here use the term Universalism in no sectarian sense, as denoting the dogmas of a creed, or any particular formula of faith. I do not mean by it, that system of doctrine which is generally known under the name of Universalism. That, indeed, I hold to be Christianity; but when I speak of the "Universalism of Christianity," I mean that Christianity is a broad and equalizing system, dealing in great principles, which are alike applicable to all men, at all times, and under all circumstances; that it is not a religion for a sect or party merely, but the religion for *man;* regarding alike the interests, the hopes, and the destinies, of our entire humanity.

And this is the single thought that I wish to illustrate in the present discourse.

I. Christianity commences with the idea of One, and only One, living and true God. So says an Apostle: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but unto us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things," 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. See you not how the idea of universality is thus recognised, upon the threshold of Christianity? For if it be true that there is *one*, and but *one* God, who is the Creator of all things; then, manifestly His religion is the religion for all men, and His worship is the only worship for man.

It is not so with the systems of the world. The different systems of Polytheism have none of them this element of Universalism. They claim no more than to be the religions of sects or nations. The religion of Greece, and of Rome, never pretended to be the religion for the *world.*

Rome had her gods, each of whom had his dominion, and none of whom could claim sole and universal empire. She built her altars to these gods, and upon them the people offered their oblations. *These* were *their* gods, but at the same time they recognized other gods, so far as existence was concerned; nor does it appear that they thought there was any impropriety in the circumstance that other nations *had*, and worshipped, their *own* gods, however different they might be from the gods of Rome.

Greece, too, had her gods; and the recognition of other gods is evident in the fact that, at Athens, in

the temple of Minerva, they reared altars to every god, foreign and domestic, of whom they had knowledge; and lest they might fail of honoring some whom they ought to honor, they built there an altar, and inscribed upon it the words of mysterious import, "To the unknown god."

No idea of *one* and *only one* religion, and that for all nations, and all ages, and all times, seems to have found its way into any of these systems of Polytheism. But the "Universalism of Christianity" appears in the fact, that it starts out with the recognition and the announcement of one universal Lord and God, who is the Creator of all worlds, the Governor of all beings, the source of all life, light and intelligence, the sum and the substance of all good, and the only proper object of adoration and worship for all men.

Moses and the prophets had indeed taught this doctrine, but it was a hard lesson for the Hebrews to learn. Often they seemed to recognize the existence of the gods of the heathen nations, and sometimes they built altars to them, notwithstanding all solemn warnings to the contrary. And generally, it may be said, they seemed to regard their religion and their God as peculiarly their *own*, while they looked upon the Gentiles as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, without hope and without God in the world.

Christianity built indeed upon the foundation of Moses and the prophets, insomuch as it taught one God, and one only; but the feature of Universality is most conspicuously exhibited in the fact, that its author broke down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, and taught that the latter were "fellow-heirs and partakers of the pro-

mises;" that *they*, too, should worship the same God with the Jews; and that, instead of regarding the Hebrews with exclusive favor on account of their faith, God overlooked the distinctions of nations, and sects, and tribes, and had concluded both Jews and Gentiles, "*all* in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon ALL."

So, then, there was neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, for they were all one; and the same God was over all, rich in mercy unto all who called upon His name.

How hardly men could lift themselves above the enclosure of creeds and sects, to a full perception of the broad and catholic "Universalism of Christianity," may be seen in the fact that Peter himself could not comprehend it, until taught by the vision of the sheet to call no man common or unclean; and it required demonstration, as in the case of Cornelius the centurion, to open the apostle's eyes, and lead him to say: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." Peter had been with Christ, and heard the word of truth from the Saviour's lips, but never until that moment had he comprehended that broad "Universalism of Christianity" which placed both Jews and Gentiles upon one common level before God, and called upon them, alike, to worship, to serve, and obey Him.

And so, all along in the history of the New Testament, we find this idea of partialism, this notion that religion was the peculiar property of the Jews, the sin that most easily beset the followers of Christ; so

that the vexed question whether the Gentiles were entitled to equal privileges with the Jews, became the theme of contention among them.

Even Peter at one time forgot the lesson taught him by the sea at Joppa, so far as to side with those who contended that the Gentiles must keep the Ceremonial Law; nor did he yield until Paul withstood him to the face, and reproved him before them all, with that home-question, "Peter, if thou being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as the Jews?" "For by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."

There is one God, who is over all, and He blesses not the Jew because he is a Jew; nor despises the Gentile because he is a Gentile; neither hath He respect unto the person of any man, but "hath concluded all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all."

II. The Universalism of Christianity appears in the fact, that it presents the Government of God as a government of principle.

I mean by this, that Christianity ignores the doctrine of expediency, as applied either to God or man, and proceeds upon those eternal principles which are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and are alike applicable to all men.

I am not unmindful that expediency is the order of the day, and that, in all the affairs of the world, as well as in religion, men are prone to forsake principles, and engage in an eager chase after the false and changing lights of expediency.

According to the theology of the world, the creation of man and his endowment with a free and independent agency, was a grand experiment which God made, to see what would come of it. And when it failed in the first transgression, the tri-personal divinity held a consultation, and hit upon an expedient to overcome the difficulty.

From that day to this, one expedient has followed another, looking to this object; and Christianity is neither more nor less than the culminating point, in a grand series of expedients for the redemption of our race, the results of which are to this day involved in much doubt and uncertainty.

So then, if we look God-ward, Christianity is thought to reveal a God whose government recognizes the doctrine of expediency, and consists of a regular succession of expedients, designed to repair the damages and to retrieve the losses of the first grand error, in permitting evil and sin to get a foothold in the universe!

And if we look man-ward, we shall find that practical Christianity is an expedient in which man is exhorted to engage, to escape the torments of hell and gain the felicities of heaven!

No great principle, no eternal law that binds all nations, and all men, runs through these systems, binding alike the beginning and the end, and holding humanity itself under its divine control. But all is fragmentary, all is partial.

Now, as opposed to this partialism of God's ways and government, I wish to show you that Christianity presents the attribute of universality, in the fact that it reveals eternal truth—truth now, truth hence-

forth, truth for ever,—and gives us the government of God as being founded upon eternal principles, and announcing *one law* as binding upon all nations, even the Law of Love.

That law gleamed upon our first parents in the garden, when came the promise that "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." It spake to Abraham, in the assurance that in his seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. It was illustrated by the prophets and seers of old, in holy songs and visions. It came in clearer and more emphatic tones from the lips of Jesus, when he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

And it blazed in full splendor from the cross of Calvary, in the prayer that breathed from a soul as true to the great Law of Love as the needle to the pole: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Thus is revealed the great *Law of Love*, manifested ever in practice, upon the principle of overcoming evil with good; and this it is that underlies and terminates the whole system of Christianity, crowning its Author with glory and with honor.

Gradually it has been unfolded, as the principle and the rule of the divine government. In the Old Testament it embodied itself in the precepts of the Law, so far as it could be appreciated in that stage of human progress. Man was then in his childhood,

and had need of the "school-master," to give him "line upon line and precept upon precept." Hence the numerous specific rules for the regulation of human conduct, in the Law of Moses. Man then needed to be told precisely what to do, under certain circumstances — which were such as existed in the state and policy of a single nation, and could not, therefore, be available by a people differently situated. Nevertheless they did, in some good degree, exhibit the Law of Love, the principle of overcoming evil with good.

But when you come to Christianity, you leave the *partial* and the preceptive view of religion, and reach the reign of *principle.* Jesus does not say to his followers, Do this, under certain circumstances, and do *that*, under other circumstances. He gives us few rules for the regulation of the hands, in specific cases; but he says to us practically, "Here is a *great principle:* take that, and go out into the world, and practice it under all circumstances. 'Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself,' and *that* will be your guide, at all times. Let it be manifested, under all circumstances, in overcoming evil with good. Hold it fast, in the midst of human want and human woe, as ye feed the hungry, clothe the naked, or visit the sick in his chamber, and the prisoner in his cell.

"Ye have outgrown your swaddling bands, and henceforth are no more under tutors and governors, but are '*free men.*' Cleave to the Law of Love, and ever overcome evil with good. Cleave to it, when offences come, and if 'thy brother trespass against thee, forgive him, not seven times only, but even unto

seventy times seven.' In the midst of angry strife, hold fast, not the precept, but the principle; and 'if a man smite thee on the one cheek, turn the other also.' Apply that great principle, even to enemies who rage around you, and seek your destruction. 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink;' and let your fealty to principle be seen in the obedience you render to the injunction, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.'

"The reason is, that God Himself practices this principle; and by so doing, 'ye shall be the children of your Father; for he maketh His sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, and sendeth His rain upon the just and upon the unjust.'" —

Such is the principle that pervades the Government of God, when viewed from the Christian stand-point, and it is easy to perceive that it is universal. It makes no exceptions. The Universal Father has no favorites to whom He does good, nor hated ones to whom He does evil. There are not some evils that He overcomes with good, and others that He overcomes with evil. But the principle is of universal application.

There lives not, and there never has lived, in all the universe of God, a man, or a being, so high or so low, so rich or so poor, so exalted or so degraded, so good or so vile, that the Almighty God will not do him good. Up to the letter of this law God Himself walks, without a hair's breadth of deviation, so that "The Lord is good, and He doeth good," is the universal truth of His government.

Standing upon this great principle, which is firm as the rock of ages and immovable as the throne of God, I can have but little respect for that captious and partial mode of argumentation which seizes, here and there, upon an isolated fact, the import of which, to our feeble vision, is dark or mysterious, and seeks with that to invalidate an eternal principle, or to impugn the undeviating faithfulness of God, in His adherence to the universal law that He requires *us* to practice. Still less respect have I for any system which denies this law of the universe, and makes God practice upon the principle of rendering evil for evil, or of overcoming evil with evil.

But further, let me say, the Universalism of Christianity is manifest in the fact, that all men are amenable to this Law of Love. It makes no exceptions, but holds all men, everywhere, bound to obedience to this great Law. There lives not a man who is without God or a neighbor, or who may justly plead that he is under no obligations to love the one, or the other.

Nay, more: There lives not a man who can disregard this Law with impunity. God Himself has so made us, that the Love of God, and of man, is necessary to our own spiritual life and health: so that whether we know the letter of the Law or not, its spirit is written upon our souls; and if we would be happy, we must love one another, and be kind. The savage can no more be happy with the fires of hatred burning in his bosom, than the civilized man. Hence, the universality of the fundamental Law of the Gospel; and hence the "Universalism of Christianity," in this respect.

III. The Universalism of Christianity appears in the fact, that the foundation of its hopes is common to all.

If we examine the systems of the world, we shall find them partial in this respect. Their hopes are meagre, and to be indulged only by the few, and their foundation is narrow and unsubstantial.

In heathenism, the man who offers his oblations full often upon the altars of the gods, and who submits to privations and hardships not a few, for the purpose of pleasing the capricious divinities—*he*, and he *only*, may hope to receive the favor of the gods. All others are cut off from all participation in the hope of enjoying that favor, or of receiving anything from the gods. Hence, hopes of Elysium, for the few, are faint and wavering, while fears of Tartarus or Erebus, for the many, are rife and terrible.

It is curious, too, how these notions of the heathen world have found their way into the Christian Church, and engendered doubts and fears that "waste our faith and nourish our despair."

Each Church has its little platform, and all who come upon that, may hope for the favor of God and anticipate blessedness from Him, but for all others there is nothing but despair. All, or nearly all, are agreed, that man's hopes for the future must depend upon something *man* can do, but what that something *is*, whether it be faith, or good works, or prayers, or penance, is not well defined.

This man unites with the Church, and conforms to all the teachings of its *ritual*, and on that fact rests his hope for all the blessedness of heaven; and as for all who are unfortunate enough to be outside the pale

of the Church, he denies that they have any right to salvation, or any reason to hope for it.

Another man has passed through a process of religious experience, called "conversion," or "regeneration," and on that fact rests all his hope of heaven. From day to day, and from year to year, he recurs to that period as the turning point of his destiny. He analyses all his feelings, and calls up the memory of his emotions, to determine, if possible, whether *his* was a genuine experience, and on the answer to that question depends his hope.

Nay, there are slighter and more unsubstantial foundations of hope than these. The mother has laid the head of her child in the dust: "He was her only son, and she is a widow," and dearer than life, to her, is his future prospect. He died without religion, and her creed can give her no hope. But a mother's love clings to him, and she seeks with eager interest for a foundation of hope in his behalf. She goes not to God, but to the life of her child. He was a noble boy: he loved his mother, and was dutiful and obedient; and in the last hour of life, he whispered a prayer for mercy. And on that slight circumstance in his life, hangs all her hope in his case. Blot that out, and all would be darkness, without one ray of light.

I am glad that the theology of the world has left to the smitten mourners of the world, this much of hope; but it is easy to see that it is a narrow and a partial foundation, and cannot be available, except to a few, and under certain circumstances. "The Universalism of Christianity" appears in the fact, that its word is ever, "Hope thou in God, and trust Him

at all times"—thus laying a foundation that is broad enough to contain, and firm enough to support, the world. It abjures all dependence upon an arm of flesh, and considers our faith and works alike impotent in the battle of death; bids us consider ourselves unprofitable servants after we have done our best, and to pray ever, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and anchors all our hopes upon the immutable love of the Being who "hath concluded all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon ALL."

Here, then, are hopes that may be common to all, and no good reason can be given why *one* poor sinner may not hope in that same infinite God, in whom another sinner is called upon to believe and trust, without a doubt or fear.

I close with a single thought. We have seen the "Universalism of Christianity" in the fact that it begins with one, and only one, God, who is alike the Creator of all worlds, and all beings, and to whom all intelligences owe allegiance: That His vast government is administered, not in expedients but upon eternal principles which run through all His ways, and bind alike every human soul: That its hope is in God, the Universal Father, and is therefore as broad as the universe: And we now submit the question, whether it is likely that a system thus universal in its beginning and continuance, in its laws, its principles and its hopes, will turn out, after all, to be partialism in fact, and find its consummation in a fragment saved, and countless millions lost?

I press not the question, for it is easy of solution; and I only charge you, one and all, to answer it to

your own souls, and in the light of the Scripture which gives us the assurance, that distinctions of faith and creed are of little worth, in the sight of that God who has "concluded all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon ALL."

*LET US PRAY.

LORD of Heaven and of earth, whose kingdom ruleth over all: In Thy hand are the issues of life and of death, and the promises of Thy holy word are but the revelations of Thine all-comprehensive and eternal purpose. Thy goings forth have been from old, even from everlasting; and we praise and bless Thee, that the night of mystery, cheered by the stars of prophecy, is passing away into the morning-glories of the Sun of Righteousness. Thy justice and Thy mercy, sundered and alienated in the doleful theories of unbelief, are joined in the fellowship of truth and grace, and the honor of Thy name shall be celebrated by a universe redeemed.

Awaken us, we beseech Thee, into a living sense of the mercy that governs in all Thy ways, and bring us at last into the full enjoyment of Thy presence, to laud and magnify Thee for evermore. *Amen.*

FULFILMENT OF THE LAW.

BY REV. J. H. TUTTLE. SCRIPTURE LESSON, HEBREWS VIII.

Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.—MATT. v. 18.

AMONG other accusations brought against the Saviour, was this,—that he had come to destroy the Law and the Prophets.

The Mosaic dispensation was venerable, not only because of its age, because it dated back in the golden days of Hebrew worthies, but also because its laws and rituals had long been linked with the dearest and holiest memories of worship. It had descended through the conflicts and changes of two thousand years; it had come to them laden with the lore of Prophets and the songs of Poets; it had been the hope of Sages and Patriarchs through many dark centuries; its solemn hymns and reverent prayers had rung through the arches of Jewish temples; their children had been often led to its holy teachings; their fathers and mothers had taken its holy vows. And thus, who can doubt that it held a sacred place in their thoughts? Who can doubt that they guarded its interests with jealous care, and looked with suspicion on any important change? The person who dared to utter a word against so old, so honorable, so glorious an institution, might expect opposition; he might expect the whole nation to burn with anger, and rise to its defence.

It happened, however, that nearly all their opposition to Christ was based on a misapprehension of what he had come to do. They feared he had come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, whereas he came not to destroy, but to fulfil. He came to honor prophecy, and not to ridicule it. He came to aid the Law they venerated so much, and not to set it aside.

The fault, then, lay in themselves. They misunderstood the Law, and misinterpreted the Prophets; and thus the Saviour only destroyed or set aside their false views of the matter. The obliquity of their vision placed him in that hostile attitude, and not he himself. *They* were the enemy of Moses, and *he* the friend. *They* destroyed the Law and Prophets, but *he* defended and honored them.

And this, I am sorry to say, is not the only instance in which truth and religion have been injured by those who professed to love them; and by those, too, who *honestly* professed to love them. A man may have religious devotion, the warmest religious feeling, and at the same time dishonor religion by his false interpretation of it. He may hold opinions which repel and disgust thinking minds—opinions which dissipate all devotion in other souls.

The false interpretations which many Christians have given of Scripture, have done it more harm than any skeptic has ever been able to do. Professing to venerate the Bible, jealous of any innovation regarding its translation, watchful of any departure from ancient standards, trembling lest the infidel should undermine its logic, they have themselves stabbed it to the heart. They have made it teach theologies at which the heart revolts, and therefore weakened its

authority. They have put words on the lips of the Prophets which the Prophets never uttered—which a true prophet never *could* utter—to which a sound mind could never subscribe; and thus impeached the assertion that such persons were prophets at all.

If the Bible could speak, it might have said a thousand times, "Save me from my friends,"—so often have those who venerated its pages misquoted and misunderstood its words. They have charged others with denying the Bible, when they themselves denied it. They have feared lest others should make the law of none effect, while they themselves destroyed it, by misapprehending its intent.

The Bible's real friend is he who reads it aright; who keeps its pages clear of prejudice and theological errors; who interprets the prophets correctly, and fulfils the written law.

The Saviour honored the Law because he sought to carrry out its purpose—because he rebuked those who perverted it and trampled its sacred obligations under foot.

An idea prevails quite extensively among theologians, that the Christian dispensation was something totally different from the Mosaic.

So it was in its outward form, but not in its spirit or essence. The essence of truth is always the same. If you penetrate the form, the local rites, the conventional services of the Jewish worship, and enter the core and life of it, you will find it differing in nothing from Christianity. It worshipped one God; it offered prayers and hymns of praise; it sought for spiritual communion; it trusted in infinite mercy and love, and hoped for a life beyond the grave. The contrast be-

tween Judaism and Christianity was caused by a substitution of the whole truth for half the truth. The latter was the bud grown into a blossom, the child advanced into manhood. The forms and ceremonies which Christ instituted were much the same, only less in number, and less in importance. Christ entered the synagogue, and worshipped with Jews. He was circumcised and baptized after the manner of Jews. He instituted a feast, similar to the feasts observed before his birth; he kneeled down and prayed, as others had done before him.

And thus you see that Christianity was *not* another and a new religion, but only a fulfilment of the old. A few services were discontinued, because no longer necessary,—because they had been the types and shadows of what had now already come. The sacrificial service terminated, because Jesus offered a universal sacrifice—a sacrifice of his own blood; and thus he became the great High Priest of all nations.

But in all this there was not a single essential truth destroyed. There was still left the necessity of religion, and religious worship; still left the doctrine of one God, one brotherhood, one faith, and one heaven. The essence of religion was untouched and unchanged.

Much of the Saviour's teaching was, indeed, a reiteration of old truth, the bringing forward of familiar sayings; but coming from his lips they seemed new, because he uttered them with spirit, and pushed them home to the soul of the listener with greater directness and power. He took the ore from its bed, and moulded it—the marble from its quarry, and burnished it—gave it a beauty, a finish, a perfection that man had never before seen. He laid hold of the old theol-

ogy, which had long become a mere fossil in Jewish minds, and gave it new life.

You see, then, that the Saviour's mission, here, was to fulfil the truth, to apply it to men's affections and conduct. Instead of displaying any intention of ridiculing, of disregarding or destroying the law, he affirmed that *not one jot or tittle of it should pass away, till all was fulfilled.*

This declaration should have been exceedingly gratifying and encouraging to the Jew. If he really loved the Law, and respected the Prophets, he should have listened to any promise of their final fulfilment, with eager delight. But he did not listen with delight, either because he disbelieved the assertion, or because his love for the Law and the Prophets was a mere pretence.

But I must leave the subject now, so far as it relates to these blinded and mistaken Jews, and follow up the suggestion which it opens to the Christian.

I begin, then, with the remark, that this declaration of Jesus is an encouraging one to us. I can think of none he ever uttered that is more so. It is an assurance which every good and generous soul has longed to find, which every Christian heart has sought to feel. To believe this promise is to reach the summit of Christian faith, to see the answer to Christian prayer. To believe this saying, is to believe what thousands and millions have doubted, and are doubting still, but which all good minds have prayed might be true.

What *is* the declaration that is so important and so encouraging? It is the declaration that the Law will some day be fulfilled—that not a single jot or tittle of

it, not the smallest part of it, shall pass, until it is universally obeyed.

I have already asserted that the essence of Divine truth, or Divine law, is always the same, that the law which God gave to Moses was the same in spirit as that which Christ came to preach, which exists now, and will exist eternally. The question then arises, what was the essence of the Mosaic Law? What was the Law which Christ came to fulfil?

Jesus answered this question himself. In answer to the Lawyer who tried to puzzle him with some shrewd interrogatories about the ancient commandments, the Great Teacher replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy might, strength, and soul: This is the *first* and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Upon these two commandments *hang all the law and the prophets.*"

The sum and substance of the law, the real spirit and essence of the law, we learn from this, is loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourself.

All the law and the prophets find their sum and substance in that. However worded, however detailed, however elaborated, they all mean that, nothing more, and nothing less.

The old law is sometimes spoken of as a law of retaliation—as a harsh, half-civilized, revengeful law, and it is affirmed that Jesus came to preach a softer, higher and better one.

In some of its details, Judaism did seem harsh, and many rules and regulations by which Moses governed the people, were retaliatory; but all such rules and regulations must be regarded as standing outside of,

and opposed to, God's law. At least they were only temporary expedients, and not the *principle* of the law which runs through all time, and extends through all humanity. However difficult it may be to understand certain detached passages, to explain certain chapters in it, the Old Testament, as a whole, its laws and its prophets, when summed up, utters this command: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and thy neighbor as thyself." This is the law which Jesus came to preach, which he *did* preach, and which he said should never pass away till all be fulfilled.

Let us here enquire, What is meant by saying the law shall be fulfilled? It means, I suppose, that all men shall obey it, that its end and object shall be accomplished. The decalogue says, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness. Now, when men *cease* to murder, and steal, and bear false witness, when they neither commit, nor desire to commit these crimes, those commands will be fulfilled.

It is a law of nature that every thing seeks an equilibrium. When things are seeking this equilibrium the law is being fulfilled: When the equilibrium is reached—when, for example, water has found its level, and the gases and particles of matter are equally distributed, then the law *is* fulfilled.

It is a law of our State that persons owning a certain amount of property shall be taxed: when that tax is paid, the law is fulfilled.

To fulfil any law, therefore, natural or spiritual, human or divine, is to obey it, to submit to its control, to let its end be carried out. The great law of God will be fulfilled when all men love God, and their

neighbors as themselves. This is what it demands, and this is what it must accomplish, at last.

I hope my hearers will not make the very common mistake, that a person fulfils the law by suffering its penalties. Law is not made to cause imprisonment and suffering. This is not its main or final purpose, and thus its purpose is not accomplished when we have simply suffered. The man who drags out his life in prison, or dies on the gallows, is sometimes spoken of as having fulfilled the law, as having answered the end of law. But that is not so. The law demands *obedience*, is satisfied with nothing short of obedience, and thus you must obey it before you fulfil it.

Suppose we grant that some men will suffer eternally. Will that satisfy the law? Is it the end of God's law, the sum and substance of Gospel truth, that some shall suffer eternally? If that is what the law seeks, if that is what it labors to bring about, and has no object beyond that, then never-ending punishment is just the thing. But the Apostle says that "*love* is the fulfilling of the law:" LOVE—not endless punishment! And so the Saviour said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy might, and thy neighbor as thyself. Upon these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." To fulfil the law, all punishment must cease, all sin must cease, and universal love and righteousness prevail. When every soul in earth and heaven is filled with love, when all men have reached a state of holiness and joy, then, and not till then, will His law be satisfied.

Let us now consider another question: Upon how many of the human race is this law of love binding?

Does God command a certain number to love Him with all the heart, and exclude others from this obligation? That cannot be. The command is unquestionably universal. It applies to every human being whom God has made.

And thus, if this law is fulfilled, *every human being must certainly obey it.* So we cannot escape the conclusion that all men will finally be saved. If Jesus had said in these words, "The whole human family will finally be saved, will finally cease to sin, and cease to suffer, and be forever holy and happy,"—if he had used these very words, he could not have stated the fact of Universal Salvation any more plainly than he has done in the text.

Look over the argument again, and see if this is not so. In the first place, the end and object of God's law is obedience: the essence, the *spirit* of it, is love: love to God and love to man. In the second place, this law is binding on every human being; the command is universal. In the third place, this law will finally be obeyed; not one jot or tittle of it shall pass till all be fulfilled. Then of course every human being will finally love God, and love his neighbor, and therefore be saved.

There is no possible and fair way of escaping this conclusion. If the text be true, universal salvation is true. To believe the one is to believe the other; to doubt the one is to doubt the other. You cannot disconnect them, for they are one and the same thing.

Let it be granted that even *one* person shall sin and suffer without end, that one soul will never repent and never love God,—let this be granted, and you deny the fulfilment of that law of love. You assert

that one jot and one tittle of it shall fail. But Jesus says, one jot or one tittle of it shall *not* pass, till *all* be fulfilled—until its work is done, its end accomplished.

I have already stated, as a law of nature, that all things seek an equilibrium; but suppose I should find a stream of water rising above its level, and remaining in that condition; or the particles of sand in the valley running up the mountain, instead of down it, and remaining there,—should I not prove, in this case, either that the law of equilibrium is not universal, that it is not binding on every particle of matter, or that it is not fulfilled?

It is the law of our State that certain persons owning property shall be taxed. Would this law be fulfilled if one-third of those persons never paid their taxes?

There is a moral law, a divine law, that every soul shall love God supremely, and his neighbor as himself; and can it be fulfilled, if some never love God, never cease to hate Him, nor to disobey Him?

It may perhaps be answered, that God has made another law—the law of punishment; and *this* must be fulfilled also. This is true; and yet you must remember that the law of punishment *hangs on the law of love*,—for Christ said, "*All* the law and the prophets hang on that." They all point to that one, and are all fulfilled in that one. The law of punishment! what is it but a means of reform? What is it but one of those instruments by which God brings the sinner to repentance and love?

So you see that the law of punishment is not fulfilled until men repent and love, for it is to accomplish

this end that men are punished. Thus, the all-wise Creator has not caused one law to conflict with another. The law of punishment is only a step toward the fulfilment of the law of love. The perfection of one blends with the perfection of the other.

Again: It may be said that God has declared and determined that some shall suffer without end. That cannot be, unless He has declared and determined a contradiction. As already stated, one fact, one law, cannot conflict with another. If it be true that not one jot or tittle of the law of love shall pass till all be fulfilled, then it is *not* true that some shall sin and suffer without end; or if it be true that some shall sin and suffer without end, then it is *not* true that the law of love will be fulfilled. Both of these statements can no more be true than that a piece of cloth can be black and white at the same instant, or the number five be any other number at the same time.

But if it be certain that every jot and tittle of the law shall be obeyed, will it not, in thousands of cases, be a *forced* obedience? Will not the Almighty step in and overcome our free agency, and *compel* us to love Him?

I am not required to answer this question, for there is the positive declaration that all shall finally be saved. If you believe that declaration, there is no need of further argument, for the question is settled. If a thousand difficulties arise, no matter; for God says His law shall be fulfilled. Whether He shall force its fulfilment, or otherwise bring it about, does not change the fact. If you do not believe the text, then no further argument is necessary,—at least no other argument will avail anything, since if that be

not believed, nothing else that we can say will have any weight.

I am not standing here to make assertions of my own—to weave cunning sophistries and flattering fictions—but to quote the written, inspired word of God. I cannot lift the veil which hangs over the future, and *see* what destiny awaits us: I walk by faith, not by sight; and my faith is centered in the revelation of the Prophets, and of Christ.

Though not compelled to answer the question, whether any person's salvation will ever be forced upon him—whether God, by any arbitrary act, will destroy his free agency—I have no hesitation in saying, that obedience will *not* be forced on any person. No person will ever become a Christian until he shall *desire* to be a Christian; but I maintain that God's law, which is perfect, converting the soul, will finally cause all men to *desire* it. It will operate so widely, so deeply, so constantly, and so effectually, that all souls will be attracted to God—will love Him spontaneously, willingly, continually,—*and this is* HEAVEN.

LET US PRAY.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, we thank Thee that Thou hast sent Prophets into the world, to reveal Thy character and our destiny; and we praise Thee for the promise, that time and eternity will surely unfold the truth of all that Thy Prophets have uttered. We thank Thee for Thy holy Law of Love, and for the assurance, given us through Thy blessed Son, that not even the

smallest part of this law shall pass until all be fulfilled.

Grant, O merciful God, that this love may reign in our hearts *now;* that it may fill all families and all nations; that its spirit may breathe through all our words, and deeds, and thoughts. Grant its sweet and sanctifying presence while we live, and when we die, and for evermore. *Amen.*

BEN-ADHEM AND THE ANGEL.

BY LEIGH HUNT.

ABON-BEN-ADHEM—may his tribe increase!—
Awoke one night from a sweet dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it bright and like a lily in bloom,
An Angel, writing in a book of gold.
Exceeding peace had made Ben-Adhem bold;
And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" The vision raised its head,
And, in a voice made of all sweet accord,
Answered, "The names of them who love the LORD."
"And is *mine* one?" said Adhem. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Adhem spake more low,
But cheerily still, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his FELLOW-MEN."

The Angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again, in a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed—
And lo! BEN-ADHEM'S name led all the rest.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

BY REV. E. G. BROOKS. SCRIPTURE LESSON, ROMANS XII.

Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men.—MATTHEW v. 13.

AN imaginative people are always addicted to symbols. The Jews, like all orientals, were eminently such a people, and their ritual was full, and the Bible, as the record of both the Old and the New Dispensation, is full of indications of this fact.

Among the symbols under the Law, salt had an important place. It was required that every meat-offering should be seasoned with it—typifying thus, it is supposed, either the fidelity and purity of heart essential in those who would render an acceptable service to God, or the friendship and communion with Him to which the sincere worshipper is admitted. Thus familiar to the Jewish imagination, it was but natural that it should occur to Christ, for the purpose for which he employs it in the text.

What this purpose was, is evident, though it does not fully appear to one who thinks only of our common salt. This is a chemical substance, the saltness of which cannot be lost so long as any portion of the substance itself remains. The salt of the East, which our Lord had in mind, was a different thing. It was a mixture, including vegetable and earthy matter, which might wholly lose its savor, and a

residuum still be left, appearing as before, but worthless, except, like our gravel, to make paths and "to be trodden under foot of men." The point of the text is seen only in view of this fact. You are the salt of the moral world, Christ said in substance to his disciples — the element of purity and of preserving spiritual force in the life of the race. But as salt, though it may still appear to be salt, is worthless if its savor is gone, so, whatever your professions or external seemings, if the power of the truth be not in you and go not out from you, you will be worthless as a positive force for good.

This was the lesson of the text to those to whom it was addressed. It has the same lesson for *us*. It will ever have the same lesson for those who call themselves Christians, until the work of christianizing the world is complete.

There is no difference of opinion among those who have any faith in Christianity, as to the use it has thus far served in the world. It is agreed that it has established itself in most intimate connections with the moral welfare of individuals and of society, and proved an unparalleled source of instruction and consolation, of quickening, of spiritual healing and regeneration. Looking back over its history, it is seen that this is the work it has been doing from the moment it became an element in human affairs. It has been widely corrupted. Error has marred its beauty, and shorn it of its power. Those who have professed it have too often been disloyal to it, and dishonored the trusts it imposed. Still, we have only to compare the present condition of the world

with what it was when Christ came, to be satisfied that, in spite of these disadvantages, it has proved the mightiest instrumentality that ever wrought for the good of mankind. "I am come," said Christ, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

In the comparison here stated and suggested, we see what these words meant, and how they have been realized. One of the New Testament terms to represent the condition of the world at the introduction of the Gospel, is "*perish*"—and there is a depth of meaning in the word, as thus applied, which has been but slightly appreciated. The period was, on many accounts, a splendid one—the culmination of heathen and philosophic possibilities in the way of human culture and civilization; rich in its artistic tastes, its external refinements, its mere intellectual attainments and ability. But spiritually, the world was in a condition of emptiness and absolute decay.

Even the Jews, privileged as they had been, were sunk into an inane formalism, out of which all soul of vital emotion, or service, had departed. Those whose only sustenance was in the mythologies, or philosophies, of the time, were in a still worse case. "The world by wisdom knew not God." Human reason and conscience had demonstrated their insufficiency for the highest purposes of morals and religion. The moral vigor of the race was exhausted. Its manhood was dying out. Its recuperative energies, its powers of self-recovery, were gone; and but for Divine succor, infusing some new life-blood, some saving force into it, the world would have perished through its degeneracy and corruption.

Christianity was the heavenly succor given: God's remedy for the decaying energies as well as for the sin of the world; the salt to preserve; the fresh life-blood to quicken; "the power of God" to vitalize, regenerate and redeem. And, once in the world, it has never been wholly lost. In the midst of the grossest corruptions, some portion of its truth has survived. In the midst of the most general disloyalty to its spirit and duties, some souls have, in some measure, been faithful to it. Through the agency of this surviving truth, and of these loyal souls, it has steadily wrought on for the ends at which it aims; and for every highest occasion for congratulation in the condition of the world to-day, for whatever is noblest in the qualities of individual souls, in their disinterestedness, philanthropy, faith, patience, purity, or aspirations, and for the laws, institutions, and social efforts which have sprung from these, Christianity, under God, is to have all the praise.

And what has been, will be. This work of Christianity in the past, is but the prophecy of that completer work by which it is to reach every soul, and lift our whole race into the enjoyment of God, through perfect harmony with Him. And this work of human instruction, consolation and salvation, it alone can do. The condition of the world before Christ came, only shows us what would be its condition now, or at any time, were he and what he has done withdrawn from it. There is no help or hope for the world in the future, any more than there was in the past, except in Christ and the life that is in him; except in Christianity, and the savor of its spirit, and the redeeming force of its principles. Men

may talk of out-growing Christianity; of philosophy and reason; of science; of the intuitions of conscience and the soul; of "human development" and progress. But the same necessities of human nature remain, and Christ, "the same yesterday, to-day and forever," alone can answer them. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" once said Peter to Christ, "thou hast the words of eternal life;" and what Peter said to him, there is still the same reason for *us* to say.

Ignorant, tempted, weak, suffering, sinful, in vain do we turn to reason, or philosophy, or science, or our own intuitions; in vain invoke any power of progress or "development" in ourselves. "None but Christ, none but Christ," reiterated the brave old martyr amidst the tortures of the stake; and so, at some time, let us attempt what substitutes we may, the deepest wants of nature will compel us to declare. Christ is the quickening spirit, and only *he*. He is "the way, the truth, and the life;" "the light which lighteth every man;" "the fountain of living water;" "the bread of life;" "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." In our weakness, there is no hand like his to make us strong. On the bed of pain, *his* ministries alone, can soothe us to rest. When our hopes are shattered, no voice can compose our disappointment, or inspire us with resignation and trust, like his. When our hearts are wounded, there is no balm like his, to heal. Standing above our dead, only he can transfigure death, and show us the path of our departed, illumined in the radiance of an immortal life.

And so, just as certainly, in our moral impotence and disease, in the waywardness of our wills, in our

conflicts with temptation, in our bondage to sin, our only sufficient help must come from *him*. Only at the foot of his cross can we have that loathing of sin, or be melted into that condition of penitence and consecration, essential to newness of life; and only in contact with him, as the medium of God's regenerative grace, can we be invigored, vitalized, saved. None like him, none but *he* can fill us with the idea of excellence, or give us "power to become the sons of God."

And what is undoubtedly true of us as individuals, is true of the race. Humanity is but the aggregate of individual souls, and there is help and redemption for it only where there is help and redemption for the feeblest soul that makes part of it. The race can be lifted up only as individual souls are lifted up. Christ is the one answer to the universal need. In him alone, the conditions for the world's moral cure and elevation are fulfilled. "Without *him* we can do nothing." Human wisdom, and the pride of reason, and the self-sufficiency of men unwilling to acknowledge their dependence upon him, may dream their dreams, and propose their plans for the amelioration of society and the regeneration of the world, without him: But they will prove, every one of them, like the oilless lamps of the virgins; prove only dreams and failures, and from them all, the world must turn at length to Christ: "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

It is by virtue of this fact, and through the relations into which they are brought to the world in con-

sequence of it, that Christians are pronounced "the salt of the earth," and that their responsibilities become what they are. Christianity has, certainly, an inherent force of its own, flowing, independent of any agency of ours, from its abstract truths and recorded facts—from the assurance of God's Fatherhood, of our Brotherhood, of the way of Divine Acceptance, and of Immortality—and especially from the Life and Cross of Christ. And yet it is apparent that, to become most positively an element in the life of the world, it must be communicated to it in the christianized personal force of its believers. Principles, or statements, may be perceived and admired abstractly: They have positive practical efficacy only as they are transfused through character and action.

On this account it was that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." And on this account, Christianity being the "power of God unto salvation," every one who believes and exhibits it becomes, in the ratio of his or her faithfulness, a saving element in the world's life. Every such person is a channel through which Christianity flows into, and diffuses itself in, the general thought and life. This is the method of human redemption; the process by which Christianity is to take possession of the world and conform it to itself. Its subjects become in turn its instruments. Christ began the work, and at every stage of its progress is present in it, its informing and quickening spirit.

But we must not forget that he operates through means. Every soul converted to him, becomes an instrument in furthering his designs. Mind acts on mind, life on life. Every added Christian character is

a new centre of spiritual healing; another point of contact with the world through which the moral life of Christ may be poured into it; and Christianity, as his vitalized and vitalizing truth, will master and save the world, because thus every soul saved will become an agent to help on the redemption of the rest.

We have here, then, a view of our relation as professed Christians to the world, which may well command our attention. We are not only concerned in the matter of Christian faith and obedience for ourselves, it admonishes us: To the extent of our possible influence, we are charged, under Christ, with the work of saving the world. We are called to be instruments and vehicles of Christ's moral force. God, if the figure may be allowed, has made him the moral battery of the universe: *we* are to be the conductors of that electric energy which flows from *him* to quicken and vitalize the race. It is not of ourselves solely, therefore, that we are at liberty to think, but of the world, and of ourselves as those summoned to diffuse the healing of truth into it, and thus to help it into a better life.

Need it be said that this is a view of our responsibility too little considered? We are disposed to regard this subject, in our action respecting it, as one in which *we*, as individuals, are solely concerned, and in which the decision lies wholly at our option. The feeling too generally is, "If we are sluggish, indifferent, unfaithful, on *our* heads will fall the consequences; and if we are willing to bear them, whose care is it but ours?

But is this right? Have not others as well as

we, (in one sense quite as much as we) a stake in our action? Acknowledging ourselves Christian at all, in our convictions and sympathies, we cannot possibly escape the social responsibilities which devolve upon us. If we can truly say that we have no faith in Christianity, and no concern in the ends it proposes,—that we have no expectation and no desire of the world's redemption, and that we are utterly infidel as to all this talk about Christ as "the light of the world," and "the Saviour of the world," then on our consciences may press no sense of the responsibility which he enforces. But confessing any faith in him, or any interest in his work, we involve ourselves by this confession in the responsibility of being active and positive instruments to realize his idea; become under obligation to commit ourselves thoroughly and earnestly to the work of regenerating and christianizing the world. Does a single individual present, fail to see that this is so?

Here then comes to us, with great emphasis, the main lesson of the text, as to *how* we are to discharge this responsibility:—The savor of the truth is to be preserved within us, that it may go out from us.

There is no danger that it will fail to go out from us, if it be but in us; nor need we give ourselves the slightest concern how. Salt that has the genuine savor, put where it may be, will be certain to communicate it, somehow. A fragrant flower, we may depend, will somehow make the world conscious of its fragrance, and the richer for it, up to the measure of its power. Not less certainly will a heart full of the fragrance of the Gospel diffuse its fragrance in the world. Not less surely will a life pervaded by the

savor of the truth, vitalized by its quickening power, be it placed where it may, diffuse that savor and help to sanctify the surrounding elements.

The burden of the text, it is easily seen, is against having "the form of godliness without the power thereof;" against wearing by profession, or otherwise, the semblance of a Christian, and lacking the spirit of the truth. And this is the thing in respect to which, more perhaps than in respect to any other, Christians need constant and special admonition. The number of persons in our so-called Christian communities is comparatively very small, who will not say, more or less positively, that they think Christianity to be true: how few there are who have the genuine savor of Christ in their lives and labors! Probably there is not one here who will hesitate to avow faith in the Divine origin and beneficent design of the Gospel:—how many are there of us who have, or who have any particular thought or care to have, its quickening spirit and power?

Suppose, my friends, that we were all pervaded by this quickening spirit of truth, as we might be if we would but hold Christianity as a real thing, how much more we should *be* as Christians!—how much more we should do!—how much more we should accomplish!—how much richer would be our experience and our joy! Who can estimate the force that would flow from us into this community, converting it to truth, and sanctifying it to God?

And what is true of *us*, both with respect to our lack and our loss of power, is too generally true of the Christian world—alas! of the Christian Church. Men and women are ready enough to cry Lord,

Lord; to wear the badge, and to march under the banner of Christianity:—too few are ready, in the spirit of consecration, to commit themselves thoroughly to do the Father's will!

Here is the great want of Christendom. Here is the reason, not only why so many souls, who might be so richly blessed in Christ, fail to know the fulness of his blessing, but why the sign of the cross fails to conquer as it might; why Christians fail as they do to prove "the salt of the earth." In no other respect, for no other reason, does there more need to be a genuine revival wherever Christ's name is named.

The Church is widely dead on this account. On this account, Christendom is full of a heathenism and its fruits, which a genuine Christianity would long ago have driven out. On this account, business, politics, religion, life, is so empty of conscience and of God. On this account, Christ's cause languishes too often where it is established, and fails to be established where it might. Hearts are cold, when they should be warm and glowing with the love of God and of His Son. Souls are dead when they should be vital in presence of the Cross. Men and women for whom Christ died, and who say that Christ is true, live as if he were a lie, engrossed with this world as if there were nothing better. The salt too widely is lacking in savor: earthy matter prevails in it—and alas! wherewith shall the world be salted?

The prayer we have need to offer, then, in this respect, for our own sake, for the truth's sake, and for the world's sake, is, "Lord, revive Thy work;" awaken us to a higher consciousness of responsibility; quicken us by Christ's vitalizing power; give us the

savor of Thy truth, that out from us may flow its life-giving and assimilating force.

This is eminently a personal matter. Will we not treat it as if it were? If Christ be not a deceit, and the Gospel a dream, and all our visions of the glory to come the emptiest fancies, there is a great work of good to be done in our world, and we are individually summoned to help it on. As honest and earnest men and women, believing in Christ,—especially as Christian Universalists, assured of a time when all souls shall be reached and sanctified by his saving efficacy, our business is to feel the responsibilities that press incessantly upon us, and to do all that is possible in the diffusion of a Christian influence.

Are we doing it? Are *you* doing it? Empty professions will not save the world, nor discharge your trusts. Have you the savor of the truth? Have you the spirit of consecration to duty? Are you a man or a woman of vital faith and of prayer? Do you feel yourself attracted towards the cross, and subdued by its power? Do you mourn for sin, and aspire after a greater resemblance to Christ? In few words, do you make God and His love, and Christ and his salvation real to you,—seek to have the Gospel as a quickening ministry within you, and work according to your ability and opportunity for it and for the ends it would secure?

If this be indeed your state, happy are you—and the peace of your heart is your own best encouragement and reward. If not, learn this as the first lesson of the Christian life and of Christian use in the world, and henceforth seek to dwell in such vital connexions with Christ, that you shall "have salt in yourself;"

that the savor of the truth being ever in you, you may serve as a positive agency for regenerating the world, hastening thus the hour when the last element of evil shall be driven from the life of our race; when Christ, as the quickening spirit, shall have subdued all souls, and God shall be all in all.

LET US PRAY.

SOURCE OF ALL GOOD! We thank Thee for every gift of Thy love, but most for Thy Son Jesus Christ. We thank Thee that Thou hast made him the answer to all human needs; that while there is help in none other, there is fulness of help in *him*, and that in the grand scheme of Thy grace he is to become precious to all souls, as their Life and their Redeemer.

God of Love, make him *now* thus precious to *us*. Help us to feel our need of him. Help us to consecrate ourselves to him, and to that work of Christian faithfulness to which he calls us. Make him the quickening spirit within us. Help us rightly to estimate our responsibilities as his disciples, and to make ourselves positively felt as a means of christianizing the world. Help us to realize that we are not our own, but that we are bought with a price, and so move us to benefit our race by glorifying Thee in our bodies and our spirits, which are Thine.

God of Hope and of Peace, mercifully forgive us our sins. Comfort us in our sorrows. Strengthen us in our temptations. Redeem us effectually unto Thyself, and hasten the redemption of the world. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. *Amen.*

CHARACTERISTICS OF BIGOTRY.

BY REV. E. FISHER. SCRIPTURE LESSON, I CORINTHIANS XIII.

For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?—2 Cor. vi. 14.

We shall better understand the intention of the apostle, in our text, if we consider for a moment the situation in which the Christian communities then stood. They were surrounded by the darkest idolatry, in both faith and practice. The great body of the people around them were wholly ignorant of the true idea of God, while they derided the whole history of Jesus, or heard it as one hears any improbable story of fanaticism and folly, regarding it as not worthy their serious attention.

The scattered groups of Christians, dispersed here and there, were scarce more than sufficient to form an exception to the general rule. In the strictest sense, the great mass of the people, knowing neither the old nor new revelation of the true God, were "atheists, and without hope in the world."

It is a manifest perversion to take the terms in which the apostle describes, with such literal truth, these atheists and heathen, and to apply them to those known among us as "world's people," or "non-professors," to whom, at the utmost, they can apply only remotely and constructively, and in a large proportion of instances are wholly inapplicable: For

the great body of the "world's people" among us, have as firm an intellectual belief in God and Christ, as any members of any Church.

This Atheism or Polytheism surrounded the early Christians like a wall. They could not enter a public building nor a private dwelling, they could not join a popular festival nor sit at a neighbor's table, but some rite or custom, some image or observance, seemed, unless they protested, to implicate them in idol worship. At marriages and at funerals, around the new-born and over the dying, wherever they mingled, they were exposed to be defiled.

There seemed to be but one method of maintaining their purity, and that was, to follow the course indicated by the apostle in our text — namely, to separate themselves from those around them, as to religious fellowship.

Doubtless, also, this interdict affected, to no small extent, the ordinary intercourse of life; for so utter was the repugnance of the Christian system to the abominations of Paganism, that it could not fail to separate those who received it, from the gross mass around them.

In this respect, again, it would fail to furnish any excuse for exclusiveness in *this* community — for it will not be pretended that the moral character of any one Christian denomination is perceptibly inferior to the general standard of other orders.

With these explanations and remarks concerning our text, let us turn to follow more strictly a single train of thought suggested by it.

The Scriptures teach us that the way which leads to life "is a strait and narrow way:" By which we

may understand, among other things, that the way of well-doing is often narrow, so that it is easy to step aside from it, and miss it, on the right hand or on the left.

A most excellent virtue, by being a little over-done, or under-done, becomes a vice. Religious decision, thoroughness, and zeal, for example, are, as indicated in our text, virtues. So, also, a strong and self-centered conscientiousness is a most commendable quality. But how easy it is for these to grow into excess, and to display the severity or superciliousness of Bigotry, and thus become a blot, or even a sin? and how often is the transition made!

How noble and excellent a thing is Christian Faith, on which, as on a rock, the whole soul rests unshaken! Yet how easy is the transition, and how logically made, from saying, "I feel confidently that I am right, and I enjoy the approving witness of my conscience," to concluding that therefore "all who differ from me must be in a wilful error, and under an accusing conscience."

How natural from this to proceed to assumptions, which others can submit to only by the loss of their self-respect, or to acts which intelligibly proclaim to all who differ from you, "Stand aside; I am holier than thou." How easy to forget the varieties of human opinion, the fallibility of human reason, the imperfectness of conception, the ambiguities of language, the many-sided aspects of truth; and to resolve in our hearts, "Truth is one; I have the truth; I must act accordingly:" And then, "Those who differ from me, have it not; they must be treated accordingly." And this last is the inception of Bigotry.

However odious we must count bigotry and intolerance to be, it must be allowed that few errors spring from a better stock, or have a nobler kin than they. For there is something in every mind of manly strength and generous temper, which leads it to pity or despise the man who cannot, dare not, or will not, possess and express opinions of his own on the great subjects of human interest, and especially on the most important of them all—Religion. Any man in our communities who has come to the age of thirty years, without having made up his mind on the great leading topics of religion, such as the existence and nature of God, and his own duty and destiny, has good cause to be ashamed of his deficiency. Then how pitiful is the man who, in religious matters, has not the mind or courage to hold, to express when proper, or to act out, his own convictions, but who goes peering and spying about, to find what views are most popular, and will most help him in his employment or business?

One who is thus selfish or timid, not only circumvents his own cunning or caution, by losing the confidence of his fellow-men, but he deservedly forfeits his own self-respect, and destroys that good foundation of manliness without which no worthy character can be built up. For what hope is there of the man who has settled it in his own mind, that he is incurably mean and meagre in his soul!

The opposite of this vacillating, apologetic man, is the Bigot, who not only has a belief, but is infallibly sure that it is right—who refuses to consider any argument in opposition to it, and who denounces as hopelessly (perhaps wilfully) wrong, all who differ

from his faith! Of the bitter fruits of bigotry we need not speak, for the world has been long cursed by its baleful products, and it is still one of the most malignant and dangerous influences which bar the great human heart against the blessed reign of Christian Love.

Now, since it is so excellent a thing for a man to have a firm religious faith, and also boldly to avow it, firmly maintain it, and zealously live up to it; and since, on the other hand, the effects of bigotry are seen to be so injurious and destructive,—let us see if we can separate them, and discern where the green and flourishing wood of Faith, changes into the dead and sapless stem of Bigotry.

The first characteristic of Bigotry which we shall mention, is this: *The bigot seldom reasons, and when he does, it is within one narrow and familiar circle.* He may have one or two arguments which he hurls at the head of every opposer. As peasants walk across the river, on old familiar stepping-stones, setting their feet always in the same place, so does he cross the stream of argument without dipping the sole of his foot in it, or varying from his predetermined footsteps. Of that patient, gentle reason, wise, strong and pliant, which is an attribute of Christian faith, he has but faint conception. Or if he thinks of it, it is to despise it as a complaisance which it is unworthy *him* to render to error. He would overcome opposition as men burst rocks, (and the human heart is to him a hard rock,) with one rending charge. Hence when he attempts reasoning, it is too often merely destructive; it is only an

expression of his dislike, and is directed to the overthrow of some opinion deemed false, rather than to the bringing in of a better view,—whereas it is one of the noblest arts of Christian faith, to root out barren falsehood, by bringing in fruitful truth. If you wish to drive copper coin out of circulation, give men silver instead thereof: so let a true faith drive out the copper of error, with the silver of truth.

But more frequently still, the Bigot wraps himself up in his own self-sufficiency, and refuses to reason, betaking himself to other weapons. Among these is *denunciation.*

It requires neither thought, nor ability, nor diligence, nor patience, nor wisdom, nor virtue, to threaten men with dire disasters, and to call them hard names. Nothing is easier than to *tell* a man that he is wrong, and shall suffer for it. Bigotry can do that. But it is a higher and a more difficult task to *show* a man that he is wrong, and to explain to him *how*, *why*, and *where* he is wrong. That is a task demanding knowledge, patience, and charity. It is the work of Christian excellence.

Again: *Bigotry resorts much to retorts and accusations.* Any form of truth, or of error, must have connection with human character. The abstract truth influences the concrete acting or being. A false belief can hardly fail to work some injury to the character of the person who cherishes it. But since we often find men who hold the truth in unrighteousness, and also other men whose hearts are better than their creeds, all wise men admit that the merits of a man's creed cannot be infallibly ascertained by the traits of

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his character. Nothing is easier, however, than to turn a discussion from a man's creed to his character, and then to find or feign a fault. This is a common artifice of Bigotry. It thus turns the thoughts from principles to actions. And these accusations and retorts form no small part of what passes for argument in the world.

In connection with this discussion of character, *Bigotry deals in imputations of evil motives.* This is one of the most natural resorts of its narrow and bitter spirit. However pure a man's conduct may be, it is always easy to impute to him bad or base motives. A bad heart, though it have the aid only of a poor invention, can imagine many bad motives for the best act. Since it is the nature of goodness to please, it is easy always, to charge that any good deeds have sprung only from a desire to gain popularity, or to gather a harvest of praise, to obtain power, or to further personal ends. The accusation is a common one, among both religious and political Bigots. They thus endeavor to blacken characters whose lustre they envy, and to retard principles whose resistless progress fills them with alarm.

Beware, then, when you find yourself assigning wilfully bad motives for the good act of another. You are acting the Bigot. There is no virtue so clear and illustrious that it may not be tarnished by such means as this. There is no principle of right so pure, that it may not thus be seemingly linked with dishonor.

A Christian man will always choose to suppose good motives where he finds good acts. A wise man

will believe that God's truth may often be infinitely better than its human advocates. We can never defend or recommend our own principles, by making flings at the conduct of others. Such a course is the result of laziness, of narrowness, of Bigotry. Christian wisdom assumes the harder task, of testing principles to discover their truth or error, and of understanding and defending its own position, acknowledging its weakness, and hoping to learn and to amend its own errors.

Bigotry expects more from coercion than from conviction. It has scanty belief in any predisposition of the human mind to what is just and reasonable. Its faith is in power, and not in reasons. If it is denied the ability to do what it would, it yet shows its relentless and overbearing spirit. It resorts to fire and fagot; to the ball and chain; to the pressure of social odium; to scowls and frowns. Its doctrine is, that neither favor, friendship, courtesy, nor mercy, ought to be shown to those in an error.

Policy and feeling may temper much the exhibitions of these harsh doctrines, but their nature remains unchanged. Hence we find, all around us, men who unite theoretical bigotry with practical toleration. Their views of the consequences which God affixes to error are such, that they can be charitable only by violence, and they are continually tearing down some part of the wall which their creed maintains around the kingdom of blessedness, that they may admit some beloved friend or neighbor through the gap.

Despite these waverings, however, the system

makes of the inevitable differences of human opinions, an offence and a crime.

But Christian Charity does none of these things If *I* am right, and my neighbor is wrong, why should I endeavor to coerce him into a change of appearances, when I know that I cannot coerce his mind? Why should I assume an unpleasant, scowling countenance? It will neither recommend my principles nor myself to him.

"Ah! but he knows better: He is wilfully wrong." This is *an imputation*, and it lies at the root of much of the bitterness which is occasioned by differences of opinion.

In abatement of such a charge, let us consider, First: Few men hold to opinions which they feel to be, *as a whole*, wrong. Second: Few hold to opinions which they do not see to be on some point open to objections.

Every man retains in his system of things, some incidentals which he feels to be objectionable, but which he tolerates for the sake of many connected things that he feels to be good. While your neighbor is looking mainly at the good in his system, you, perhaps, are looking mainly at the evil. Use, then, the charity which this view suggests, and avoid Bigotry.

Christian virtue keeps us always awake to the evils in our own system, and alert on our guard against them. It also helps us to see clearly the evils of other schemes, and teaches us how to expose and correct them, and to exercise charity for those who still cling to them. It moderates the severity of parties and sects, and makes the reception of truth and

the rejection of error more easy, by separating those operations of the mind from pride and passion.

Bigotry, like a frost, holds all things as they are. A Bigot in the right cannot correct the errors of others; a Bigot in the wrong cannot amend his own.

Errors are to be chased out of the minds of others, as we would drive an intruding ox out of our choice garden. If we allow passion to prevail, and fall on him violently with blows, and pursue him with shouts, we much increase and aggravate the mischief. But let us see where he came in, or where he may best go out: Go gently, and drive him to the place, restraining meanwhile our boiling but unprofitable indignation, and we shall get rid of the troublesome intruder.

Just so, if we fall upon a man's opinions with headlong violence, or overbearing force, we rouse a will equal to our own, and it becomes a struggle of will against will, rather than a comparison of reason with reason. Meantime, in the struggle, all the beautiful flowers of grace and good-will are trodden beneath our reckless feet. Thus Bigotry perpetuates and aggravates errors and mischiefs, while Christian grace and reason cure them.

Who would wish to be a Bigot? No man, we dare affirm. Take care, then, not to do those things which characterize Bigotry.

Do not substitute denunciation for reason, nor accusation for argument. Do not think that sneers, scowls, or sharp retorts, are good defences of truth, or the best weapons with which to assail error. Do not attempt to extort by force, or to coerce by fear, that which can be won only by conviction or by

kindness. Use neither your social, moral, nor intellectual power to overbear any man. Do not attempt to convince a man of his errors, by frowns, nor by injuries to his business, nor by alienating his friends. Do not, without good proof, impute men's opinions to ill motives, nor apply to them rules of judgment which you cannot yourself endure.

On the other hand, let us remember that it is not Bigotry to hold firmly and manfully to a well-defined set of opinions. It is not Bigotry to recommend and defend them. It is not Bigotry to reason and work against all conflicting views.

In truth, we should count that indifference which holds all opinions alike, as a far worse and more deadly evil than Bigotry, as paralysis is more terrible than delirium. No wise man can hold to any concord betwixt truth and error: he must know that one repels the other.

We may hence consider that we are not to charge every man who energetically differs from us, with Bigotry; for he does not incur that charge so long as his temper and means are proper. Nor can we allow ourselves to be charged with it, so long as we use Christian means, and hold the Christian spirit. And in that spirit may God keep us free from all fellowship with unrighteousness, and all communion with darkness, and very far from the spirit of Bigotry.

LET US PRAY.

We beseech Thee, our Heavenly Father, that Thou wouldst help us to study with candid minds, and with faithful hearts to hold and practice, all the

truths revealed to us by Thy word and providence. Endue us with an earnest and living zeal for truth, and clothe us with that gentle and patient charity which is inculcated by our blessed religion. In such manner as it was exhibited by our blessed Saviour, so may it ever live in our hearts. By its influence may we be enabled to live as good neighbors, and good citizens of this community, and of the nation of which we form a part.

Bless Thou and aid all good men of every name, order and station, who love Thy truth, and who labor for the good of their fellow-men. Repress, we beseech Thee, the spirit of bigotry and of intolerance, and bring into a happy union all who love justice and mercy, and who feel the power of faith. Help us to be lovers of good men, and gather us at last to the full communion of all Thy redeemed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

BY REV. E. H. CHAPIN, D.D. SCRIPTURE LESSON, MATTHEW VI.

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?—MATTHEW vi. 26.

THERE are certain problems which can have only a practical solution. They must rest finally upon the decision of common sense. We cannot hold them in any consistent theory. We cannot disentangle them by any metaphysical analysis. But the moment we adopt our spontaneous convictions, and act simply as we feel; there is no real difficulty in the way. Men have fallen into error by thinking too much, as well as by thinking too little. They have over-reasoned and over-refined, and, without any satisfactory result, beat about in that uncertain sea of speculation which limits and exceeds all thought.

In the meantime they have *acted*, in respect to those very questions, as upon grounds of the utmost assurance. For instance, there is the old question with which philosophers have puzzled themselves and others, from time immemorial,—the question whether there is any real, substantial world external to ourselves, or whether it is not all a phantasm of our own minds.

It is extremely difficult by formulas of logic, or metaphysics, to prove that there *is*,—difficult to find the bridge which shall connect and authenticate the

two facts; and yet no man is troubled with doubts upon this subject in his conduct. He lives and moves with reference to a world without, as well as to himself, and feels it to be a fact co-ordinate with his own consciousness.

So is it, my friends, with the great truth proclaimed in the text—the truth of a Divine Providence. If you look at it simply as a theory, and consider all its relations, there is perplexity in it: it springs a problem which no reasoning of ours can ever settle. But every man, unless he is that rare thing an absolute atheist, in some form or another believes this doctrine of a Providence,—*feels* it to be true—*acts* as if it were true. When he sets himself down in a sharp, metaphysical mood, he is perplexed by queries respecting *general* and *special* Providence, or by the apparent antagonism between the Divine Sovereignty and human free-will. And yet, *who* does not hear these words of the Saviour with glad consent of heart—perceiving that, in the truth of this declaration, the universe is bright and harmonious, and that, if it were not true, all would be dark indeed? Who does not find his deepest convictions responding to this appeal: "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

If one wants merely to give his intellect gymnastic exercise, and train it to feats of agility, he may speculate upon the questions, *how?* and *why?* which this doctrine of a Divine Providence opens up; but if he wants sanction for conduct, or incentive for effort, or comfort in trouble, he draws back from these abstrac-

tions, and applies his common sense, not to cause but to phenomena—to the practical facts as they stand before him.

Thus, for instance, there is no practical difficulty between "special" and "general" in that conception of Providence which we feel to be true. We know but little of the Divine Method, but still we can believe that God works for general ends, and yet works specifically; directs His tender care and love upon you and me. We can believe that He works by law, with stupendous regularity, and yet can touch all the issues of our humanity—can succor its weakness, direct its forth-goings, and answer its prayers—even as He moves planets and systems in their orbits, and at the same time feeds the little wild-bird in its nest.

Thus, too, while we hold the doctrine of a Providence that over-rules all things, we escape the sweeping result of Fatalism. Of course, such a doctrine of Providence is identical with the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty. How can God provide for all issues, if He does not foresee them? and what if He did foresee them, if He had not final control over them? If some unforseen contingency should occur—if some ungovernable agent should slip in, the universe might lose its balance, the sparrow might lose its food. In any consistent conception of Providence, the band of Divine Sovereignty must stretch around all the oscillations of matter, and all the movements of mind.

But then what becomes of man's free-agency? If God has this foresight and omnipotence, how am I to blame for sin? How can I help it? May I not silence the rebuke of conscience, and throw the

responsibility upon the Deity, and so draw immoral comfort from the doctrine?

Now, I say, we may speculate here until the end of our days, and gain nothing tangible in this way; but the practical answer is in our own consciousness. *That* assures us of our freedom, just as clearly as we are convinced of the Divine Sovereignty.

In the last analysis, we know nothing about God except through qualities existing in ourselves. Nature and Revelation make Him known to us, but they appeal to something within us kindred to the attributes which they declare. If we had no conception of origination and construction in our own experience, we could not appreciate the argument for design so irresistibly forced upon us now, wherever we turn our eyes. If we had no sympathies, we should know nothing about God's love. If we had no moral nature, we could not comprehend His justice. How, then, my friends, do we get a conception of the Divine Freedom, unless we have a consciousness of freedom in our own nature? We may say that He is infinite, and we are finite; but that distinction pertains to degree, not to kind. Our intelligence is finite, and our love, and our justice; but still it *is* intelligence, love, justice, kindred to the Divine. So our freedom is the freedom of finite beings, but still it *is* freedom, and involves the responsibilities of freedom—involves choice, and duty, and blame for wrong-doing.

Our consciousness of free-will in ourselves, I say then, enables us to comprehend the fact of freedom in the Divine nature, and this very consciousness stands before any theorizing that might lead to a

mere fatalism, and forces us to acknowledge our moral responsibility. No matter what we may *say* about the Divine control, every man *knows* that he is free to act right or wrong, and feels himself to blame when he takes the latter alternative. And, I say, while this simple fact of consciousness may not clear up the perplexity which the merely speculative intellect finds in endeavoring to reconcile Divine Sovereignty with human free-agency, it is the common-sense key which unlocks the door of practical action.

How does this doctrine of Providence affect you, and me, and everybody? Do we feel that it encourages wickedness, and justifies sin? The Saviour proclaims this beautiful truth—that God feeds the birds of the air, and numbers the hairs of our heads; and we feel that He pervades all things, upholds all things, leads all forward in His own sublime plan. But, as the thought rushes upon us, as we ponder it, and let it beam in upon the mysterious passages of our life, does it seem to inspire us with the desire of wrong-doing? Does it seem to give license to the same? No: I undertake to say, there never was a man who entered into the *spirit* of the text, and felt like applying the doctrine which it contains, to a wrong purpose.

No man ever felt as a sinner, in his sin, like appealing to it as a *sanction* for his sin. The bad man is conscious of this fact of a Providence working in all things, but he is conscious of it as a fact working not *for* him, but *against* him—a serene benignity with which the current of his life does not run parallel; a pervading Presence that startles him with its searching inspection; an adjusting process that never over-

looks the wrong. The murderer, in his discharge of passion, or his lust of malice, does not rest comfortably on this doctrine of Divine Providence; nor the thief in his secresy; nor the libertine in his plot; nor the usurper on the throne. The tide of Divine Sovereignty is, in his experience, a head-tide. It flows against him, not with him. God is an uncomfortable thought to him. He had rather there were none. Atheism, chance, a dead world-machinery without plan, without vindication, suits a bad man much better than the beautiful truth which Jesus illustrated by the fowls of the air, and the lilies of the field.

You perceive, then, how our practical consciousness holds to the doctrine proclaimed in the text, and at the same time escapes those perplexities which occur to the mere speculative intellect. Our consciousness, I say, holds this doctrine of Divine Providence. It is the spontaneous conviction of almost every man—the conviction not only that there is a God, but One who cares for us, who sustains us, who ministers unto us continually. One who has a plan, and carries it surely forward; whose purpose the great universe fulfils, running on golden wheels; in whose embrace is gathered up each individual life; whose intention unfolds in the steady beat of universal law, in the falling of a leaf, and of a hair; to whom we may confidently lift the appeal of our sorrow and our hope; upon whom we may patiently rely; but who rebukes our indolence, and from whom, in our guilt, we shrink in terror and in shame. Deeper than our theories and our disputes, is an intuitive faith that responds to the teaching of Jesus: "Be-

hold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

Having thus seen how profoundly in our conviction this doctrine of Divine Providence is fixed, let us consider some of the indications without us, which confirm its truth.

The most apparent of these—the grandest scale on which the operation of a Providence appears—is the entire system of the natural world. It is true that here is the field, from which, in theory, many seem to exclude the notion of a Providence. They speak of Nature as a stupendous machine, wound up and running by its own vitality—an automaton, which, by a kind of clock-work, simulates a life and an intelligence that are really absent from it. Or, if they do not deny the operation of a Divine Providence, they refer to what is termed "the laws of nature," in such a manner as to shut off the immediate agency of God.

But what *is* a law of nature, except a fixed way in which the Creator works? The finest element that the chemist can detect; the subtile, immaterial force, whatever it may be,—is not *the law*, but merely *an expression* of the law. And in the last analysis, we cannot separate law from the operation of intelligent will. I do not say that God acts only through nature, or that God is identical with nature; but in a profound sense it is true that Nature is Providence. God, who in essence is distinct from His works, is perpetually in His works. And so every night and every day His Providence is illustrated before us.

His beneficence streams out from the morning sun, and His love looks down upon us from the starry eyes of midnight. It is His solicitude that wraps us in the air, and the pressure of His hand, so to speak, that keeps our pulses beating. O! it is a great thing to realize that the Divine Power is always working; that nature, in every valve and every artery, is full of the Presence of God. It is a great thing to conceive of Providence as both General and Special, comprehending immensity in its plan, yet sustaining the frailest filament of being, and elaborating the humblest form.

Take up, as much as you can, in your imagination, the great circle of existence. How wide its sweep! how immeasurable its currents! And are there some who tell us that God cares only for the grand whole, and has no regard for details—that this is beneath the majesty of His nature, the dignity of His scheme?

I say, again, that Nature is Providence, and this tells us a different story. For it is full of minute ministrations, as though the Divine solicitude were concentrated upon the insect or the worm—so that whatever thing you observe, it seems as though the universe were constructed and arranged for *that* alone. And the sublimities of God's glory beam upon us in His care for the little, as well as in His adjustments of the great—in the comfort which surrounds the little wood-bird, and blesses the denizen of a single leaf, as well as in the happiness that streams through the hierarchies of being that cluster and swarm in yon forests of the firmament; in the skill displayed in the spider's eye, in the beauty that quivers upon the butterfly's wing, as in the splendors that emboss the

chariot-wheels of night, or glitter in the sandals of the morning.

It may be said, "All this is done by law;" but, I say again, law cannot be separated from intelligent will. Nature is God perpetually working, and we need only look around us to see and to feel that truth of a Providence to which our deepest instincts turn. We need only look around, to feel how true as well as beautiful is that which the poet has said, without confounding the Deity with His works, but in the sense of the Apostle's words, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being."

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
> That, chang'd through all, and yet in all the same;
> Great in the earth, as in th' etherial flame;
> Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
> Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
> Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
> As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
> As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
> As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:
> To Him no high, no low, no great, no small;
> He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all."

But the proof of a Divine Providence is also unfolded in the History of Humanity. Leaving out of view all the claims of a supernatural Revelation, and taking up the course of things through the ages, simply from the stand-point of science, it all bears evidence of a *plan*. Perhaps we are not competent to say what kind of a plan, nor exactly what purpose fulfils. Our experience is too short to span the

arc of God's intention. And yet we see enough to detect the harmony, method, co-operation of agencies; enough to feel assured that History is not a chaos of fortuitous revolutions, and whirling nationalities. Every move on the great chess-board of the globe, has been calculated, and the minute and the remote has had linear connection with the vast and the present.

It is beautiful to see events simple, fragmentary, extemporaneous, anomalous, starting up in different quarters of the horizon, falling into symmetry, and coalescing at last with the great whole. Now it is an expedition of adventure carelessly strolling over the world. Now it is a cloud of conquest looming like a dim speck in the sky. Now it is the fiery words of a Prophet, flung like coals upon a people's heart. Now it is a king's lust, or a woman's quarrel. Now it is a little colony pitched from wave to wave. But see how the invisible shuttle weaves it all, woof and warp, into a consistent plan! See how one influence catches into another, and the falsehoods are sifted, and the truths survive! See how the life of one people is poured into the life of another, and defeat becomes victory, and destruction turns out to be growth; and, without being able to mark any sharp transition, a change comes over the face of the ages, beautiful, mysterious, full of inward spirit—like that which comes over a human face, passing from youth to maturity! We do not know exactly how the old Wrong crumbles away, how the contested Right passes into quiet sovereignty; but somehow "the leaven leavens the lump." We cannot safely predicate progress in our own little span of time. To some wise men,

there may seem to be decline and retrogression; but when we measure by one of God's days—one of those days which are a thousand years—there can be no doubt about "progress." The sea-mark is evidently higher. The world is better. The prophet has not spoken, the hero has not fought, the martyr has not died, in vain. Evidently in the course of humanity, as in the course of nature, there is a plan. History also is Providence; and we may believe that the most insignificant thing, something apparently of no more importance in the great economy than the wild-bird's food, is marked, and over-ruled, and made to do its work.

And, whether it be on the general plain of history, or in narrower fields of observation, who has not marked the final triumph of the right, the good, the true,—a prevalent justice; a curve of limitation in which all oscillations are rectified? Tell me what bad man stands triumphant through the ages? What hypocrite wears always his silken robes? What sham reputation, that, with the rust and the weather-stains, does not show the tinsel and the brass? What fine gold that does not come out pure? What jewel that does not sparkle at the last? Did a truth ever die? Did a falsehood ever live? Did a wrong, sheathed in parchment, propped up with bayonets, strung with a million sinews, ever continue without being sapped and mined and thrown off, as an intolerable burden, by the popular heart?

Each of you can best tell what has marked his individual life—how often he has been evidently *led*, he knew not why. In what singular positions he has been placed, and what mysterious implication, leading

to momentous consequences, has blended with his own will! But certainly, wherever we look, nothing is more evident than the truth of a Providence—a power above us, interested in us, over-ruling all. Events, things, world-movements, individual experiences, contemplated from a partial point of view, may seem chaotic, purposeless, disconnected, like the foam-flakes, pitching, whirling, turned into mist, bounding into white annihilation, at Niagara. But every atom of that dishevelled water is held in the curve of nature, and descends by law, and combines, and sweeps onward to the broad lake. So with human events: They are governed; they accomplish a majestic course; and over their maddest plunging, their most terrible anarchy, there arches the superintending Providence—a bow in the cloud.

Having thus considered the spontaneous faith in a Divine Providence which exists in the human heart, and the confirmations of that doctrine which appear in different spheres, let us, finally, inquire what are the moral results of this belief—what is the tendency and the efficacy of it?

I have already shown you that this conception of a Providence is a very different thing from Fatalism—that it does not favor indolence nor encourage sin. Indeed, a consoling faith in this truth is one of those blessings which are added unto us, we having sought first the kingdom of Heaven and the righteousness of God. No sane man dares look up from his unplanted field, and ask God to give him a harvest, or to bless him in and for his sins.

The conviction of a Divine Providence springs up

eminently in a religious soul—the soul of a man who has done all that he can, and the best he can; and it springs up in a two-fold conception—the conception of a Power working with our agency, and that of a Power working beyond our agency. The first we can be conscious of, only in endeavoring after the right and the good; otherwise we feel that we have no alliance with Providence—feel that it is working against us: And, in the next place, we can become aware of a Power working beyond our agency, only by pushing our agency to its utmost. The first of these conceptions, therefore, is incompatible with wilful sin, and the second with indolence; and the doctrine of the text forbids any immoral conclusion.

But I observe, in the first place, that this doctrine of Divine Providence is a source of *cheerful inspiration*. There are, my friends, two methods of religious improvement. The one is attained by looking into ourselves—by considering our deficiencies and our sins, by probing our affections, and uncovering our secret motives. The other is by looking away from ourselves—from our own narrow sphere of experience and action—to the Divine character and agency. Each of these methods must have its turn, if we would secure an earnest and a healthful religious development.

There are some who err by contemplating the Divine action only. Their theology consists in an exposition of what God is going to do. Their religion is comprised in the sentiment of resignation and trust. It is needful that these should awake to a conviction of what man must do—to a sense of sin, and duty, and personal responsibility.

But, on the other hand, men have a morbid tendency to introspection—pare away the roots of motive and affection, until their piety becomes sickly, and their entire nature over-sensitive. And for such as these it is well to present the great truth of Divine Providence—to feel that all our agency merges into the scope of infinite wisdom, love and power—that the destiny of the world is not poised upon our individual decision; but, like the law that majestically carries our globe through space, we are embosomed, and uplifted, and borne along by an Unchangeable and Illimitable Goodness. It is a blessed thing, sometimes, to lose ourselves in this Divine Immensity—to shake off our individual solicitude, and swim in the current of the Supreme Plan—to lean our tired and distracted hearts against the Great Heart that beats in the movement of all things.

Again: This doctrine of Divine Providence is a doctrine of *strength and victory*. The man who actually believes it, and affiliates with it, has overcome the world. Let events play as they will, he is on the winning side. He is stronger than public opinion, stronger than institutions, stronger than death. In the tenth chapter of this Gospel of Matthew, this doctrine of Providence is reiterated, in connection with a prediction of the toils and the persecutions which should fall to the lot of the early disciples of Jesus.

How it must have animated them! and how this same grand truth has animated others in all ages since! How many struggling spirits, how many depressed and tempted natures, have drawn courage, yea, omnipotence, from those simple words: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them

shall not fall on the ground without your Father. * * * * Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

And, surely, I need not speak of the *consolations* which flow from this doctrine of Divine Providence. How could we live without it? Is there any man so strong, so girt about with prosperity, so imperturbably happy, that he never feels the need of believing in some great kind Power that carries us on through this mystery and perplexity, and will make all right?

For my part, when I think what Life *is*—in a large degree bright, beautiful, joyous; and yet when I think what mingles with it, what *does* come, and *must* come,—I am thankful for every revelation of Science, that shows our world (in which are bound up so much sin and so much care) as a little orb linked in a grand system of relations, and carried through immensities of space.

But especially am I thankful for every confirmation of these suggestions that fell from the lips of Jesus, and that he has so clearly taught us that Providence is not only *general*, unfolding in the majestic movement of natural laws, but *special*, numbering the very hairs of our heads.

Is there any man so strong that he never needs this truth—so satisfied that he never looks out for it? Are there not times when the distracted brain, and the saddened soul, can feel that this faith lifts them up into a broad, serene light, while sorrow and trial are forgotten, and the garment of heaviness drops away? Are there not issues in life, when the heart of the stoutest and the most confident, comes throbbing like

a child's heart, and lulls itself to rest on this beautiful fact of Providence?

It is *not* when we lean back in guilty indolence, or timid distrust, that we can claim the help of a Providence: It is not then that we can discern that there *is* a Providence at all. On the other hand, those who have been characterised by adherence to this truth, have always been the strongest *workers*.

And *we*, working like them in the confidence of a child-like trust,—like them also entangled in those darker issues of Life,—may rejoice to catch the suggestion of the Saviour, as the poet has done—tracing the flight of the wild-bird, that has been made for us a symbol of God's universal Providence:

> "He who, from zone to zone,
> Guides thro' the boundless sky thy certain flight,
> In the long way which I must tread alone,
> Will lead my steps aright."

* LET US PRAY.

FATHER OF ALL, who art working in and through all things, by the power of Thine invisible and eternal Presence: Awaken us into grateful reverence of Thy gracious providence, and into the true life of personal religious endeavor. Make us sensible that the duty commanded by Thy heavenly law, leads ever to the destiny appointed by Thy holy will, and that the ways of duty and destiny are alike the paths of pleasantness and peace. Mercifully enable us to work *out* what Thou art working *within*, that thus by our lives we may confirm the acknowledgment of our lips, that Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE.

BY REV. THOMAS B. THAYER. SCRIPTURE LESSON, ROMANS V.

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.—EPHESIANS i. 18.

A PLEASANT, and ever-welcome theme, is Hope. The poet, the orator, the preacher, the moralist, all delight to expatiate upon its sweet influences, its ministries of courage and patience, its beautiful dreams, its glorious promises. The friend of all conditions and ages, it sheds its radiant light into the heart of the child, and the man of three-score years and ten; and bestows its cheerful smile alike upon the glad and the wretched, the high and the low, the good and the evil, the living and the dying.

Oh how dark the world would be without its blessed visions of truth and love! how oppressive life itself sometimes, if it were not for its promise of brighter days! But with its kindly smile to encourage us, and its pleasant songs lingering about us, how much we can endure! how the darkest night of discouragement and sorrow is illuminated, as with the glory of the everlasting stars! There is no evil that is wholly evil, while Hope stays with us, and whispers its sweet sayings in the ear; there is no cloud but is edged all around with a golden fringe of light from the sun shining behind it.

"Auspicious Hope," says Campbell,—

"Auspicious Hope! in thy sweet garden grow
Wreaths for each toil, a charm for every woe:
Won by thy sweets, in Nature's languid hour
The way-worn pilgrim seeks thy summer bower;
There as the wild-bee murmurs on the wing,
What peaceful dreams thy hand-maid spirits bring!
What viewless forms the Æolian organ play,
And sweep the furrowed lines of anxious thought away."

But I must turn from this general theme, and call your attention to the particular subject of the Christian's hope, which I propose to illustrate from the sacred text, that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, you may know what is the hope of His calling, and the rich glory of God's inheritance in the saints.

The Christian's hope is a subject of constant rejoicing in the New Testament, and the early Christian records are full of allusions to the blessedness which the hope of the gospel brings to the soul of the believer. With Paul it is a specially favorite theme, as his preaching and his epistles abundantly show. He rejoices in it with all his heart, is comforted in his sorrows, strengthened in his trials and persecutions; is made victorious over every form of suffering and evil, and sings his song of triumph amid the gloom of death and the grave, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Knowing the worth of this great hope by experience, he is earnestly desirous that others should come into the joy of it; and he exhorts those having it, not to be moved from it, or turned away from its heavenly light.

Let us, then, with his help and guidance, inquire

into the nature and objects of this gospel hope, that, possessing it, we also, with the first disciples and converts, may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The important point which will appear in the Scriptural testimony, and which I wish particularly to bring out to notice, is, that this gospel hope is intimately associated with—is indeed identical with, the great fact of the general restoration, the deliverance of all from the bondage of sin and death into the holiness and bliss of the immortal life. This divine purpose of God, this glorious consummation of the Saviour's heavenly work, is the object and foundation of the gospel hope; the great end of the kingdom of heaven on earth, to which the early believers looked forward with unutterable emotions of gratitude and joy

This great thought, this momentous truth of God, is singularly associated with the mention of the Christian hope in the New Testament; and in the preaching and the writing of the disciples, the naming of one seems immediately and always to have called up the other, as though they were inseparable, identical in substance as the parallelisms of Hebrew verse. The gospel hope, and the great redemption, are only two forms of speech for expressing the same truth.

But I come to the testimony, the first being in Hebrews vi. 11–20: "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of *hope* unto the end: that ye be not slothful [or hesitating, doubtful,] but followers of them who

through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For verily men swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the *hope* set before us,—which *hope* we have as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast, *and which entereth within the vail*, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus."

This passage shows you how the gospel hope and promise are identical, how they stand connected with the great restoration, and extend beyond the present order of things, beyond any deliverance in this world, entering within the vail of death.

First. You will note how this hope is associated with the promise to Abraham, of which Paul says, "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Here is the universality of the blessing in Christ, which is the object of the Christian hope.

Second. Note how it is associated, through the resurrection of Jesus the Forerunner, with the glory and the joy of the immortal life. It enters within the vail, stretches beyond the bounds of death and the

grave, and fastens itself in the heavenly land; thus becoming a heavenly hope, a sure and steadfast anchor to the soul, amid all the storms of life and of death.

Third. Note that all this rests on two immutable things as an eternal foundation: 1st. The Promise of God. 2nd. The Oath of God. Surely there can be little doubt in any mind that this hope, built on such a foundation, will be realized, swallowed up at last in the fulness of complete fruition. Well might Paul say that we have here a strong consolation; a refuge for ever in the hope set before us, if we will but lay hold upon it.

Illustrative of the same truth is the language of the apostle in his defence before Felix: "This I confess, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things written in the Law and the Prophets,—and have *hope* toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust," Acts xxiv. 15. Here also the hope of the gospel is identified with the resurrection of the dead, entering within the vail.

The phrase, "just and unjust," is only expressive of universality, not of character. As we say, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, high and low, rich and poor. Paul had too large a heart, and too much Christian love, to hope for the resurrection of the unjust, *as such*. Hope is made up of desire and expectation. Neither Paul, nor any other human being, could *desire* the resurrection of the unjust, that they might be given over to endless torment. He could not

have hoped or wished their resurrection, except on the ground of its being a blessing to them.

It would be as reasonable, when I say I believe in the resurrection of Jew and Gentile, to suppose I expect them to enter the future world *as* Jews and Gentiles distinctively, as to suppose Paul expected the dead to be raised as distinctively just and unjust. He does not refer to the *character* of those raised, but only to the extent or universality of the resurrection; which as revealed in the gospel is to him an object of desire, the consummation of the Christian hope.

Again, in his speech before Agrippa, he connects the two in a like manner: "Now I stand and am judged for the *hope* of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, *hope* to come. For which *hope's* sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews." And then, as if to set forth the nature of this hope, he suddenly appeals to the king in explanation: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Acts xxvi. 6, 7.

Here again the gospel-promise to the fathers, and the resurrection of the dead, are associated with the Christian hope—showing that this hope embraces the great redemption of all nations and families and kindreds of the earth in the seed of Abraham, which is Christ; and at the same time, that the completion of this redemption, and the greatness of its blessing, will extend into, and only be realized in their fulness in the resurrection state. Hence he rejoices in the "*hope* of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;" that eternal life

which, commencing here, through faith, is perfected in the world immortal. And to the same purpose Peter thanks God, who, "according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto *a living hope* by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." 1 Peter i. 3.

A single testimony more, and I shall dismiss the argument of the Scriptures: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature [that is, the human creature or species, the intelligent creation,] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same, *in hope*, because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Rom. viii. 18.

Here, in language as positive as it is eloquent, the gospel hope is directly associated and made identical with the restoration of the human family, its redemption from corruption, from sin and death, into the glorified state of the blessed spirits. The apostle declares, directly, that we are subjected to vanity, which term signifies imperfection, corruption, misery, evil both physical and moral, including that of sin and death—he affirms that the intelligent creation was subjected to these, with express reference to the hope of deliverance from them, in the fulness of times, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Though for wise purposes it seemed good to the

Father that man should be ushered into being amid the vanities or imperfections, the weakness and sorrows and death that inhere in this earthly state, yet He left him not without the hope of a better estate; and in the gospel of His Son has given him assurance of the full fruition of this hope, assurance that the whole intelligent creation shall at last be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of holiness and immortal life! This He reveals in Christ as His purpose and plan, formed within Himself, of his own good pleasure, before we were made, before our subjection to the bondage of corruption commenced.

And this is the glorious hope of the gospel, the blissful hope of the true Christian believer, embracing the whole family of man, entering within the vail of death, fastening itself beyond the grave, an anchor to the soul sure and steadfast! It is of this Paul speaks, when he exclaims, "we are saved by hope;" saved indeed from all the gloom and terror that otherwise would gather about death and overshadow the tomb; saved from all painful doubts, from all anxious fears, from all maddening despair in the day of our desolation; saved with the present and special salvation, which those experience who believe in this future and universal salvation; saved indeed by

> "—— the hope, the blissful hope,
> Which Jesus' grace has given,
> The hope when days and years are passed,
> We all shall meet in heaven."

And now I come to the close, with two or three practical points briefly stated, trusting withal, that

the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, you are able to see what is the hope of God's calling in the gospel, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in His sanctified children.

I. John says, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure," 1 John iii. 3. My brothers and friends, I earnestly ask your thought to this saying of the beloved apostle. Let all who profess to have this hope, give this proof of having it; the proof of purity of heart and life, such as Christ commands in his teachings and example. This is the true test of sincerity, the only evidence a man can give of possessing the Christian hope. It is the only badge of discipleship which Christ acknowledges. Look to it, then, that the cause of the Saviour is not wounded in the house of his professed friends. Either be pure as he is pure, or make no pretence of having the great hope of his gospel in your hearts; and presume not to take his holy name upon your lips.

II. Paul exhorts believers respecting their departed friends, that they "sorrow not even as others, which have no hope." I intreat you in your times of bereavement, that you remember this exhortation of the great apostle; that you cherish this divine and glorious hope of the gospel, respecting those that are asleep, those who have gone before us into the shadowy valley of death. You will find it a strong support and consolation; and submission and peace will come and dwell with you, while it sings to you of the eternal joys of the departed.

III. This hope is our refuge in death, the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering within the vail, whither Jesus, our Forerunner, hath entered for us. For us also, if we accept it, this glorious hope of the gospel lifts up its hymn of lofty cheer, its hymn of victory over death. For us it sheds down into the lone valley the celestial light of its great truth, the auroral splendor of the immortal world!

"Unfading Hope: when Life's last embers burn,
When soul to soul, and dust to dust return—
Heaven to thy charge resigns the awful hour!
O then thy kingdom comes, Immortal Power!
What tho' each spark of earth-born rapture fly
The quivering lip, pale cheek, and closing eye—
Bright to the soul thy seraph hands convey
The morning dream of Life's eternal day.
The strife is o'er,—the pangs of Nature close,
And Life's last rapture triumphs o'er her woes!"

LET US PRAY.

O LORD, we adore Thee for that infinite goodness displayed in the plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. We magnify Thy mercy for the blessed hope of immortality revealed in him; for the gospel promise that all Thy family on earth shall have part in this incorruptible inheritance.

We, Thine unworthy children, acknowledge with humble and grateful hearts, the paternal love which thus freely forgives all our sins, delivers us from the bondage of death, and opens for us the gates of eternal life.

Gracious Father, having this heavenly hope in Christ, may we purify ourselves, even as he is pure, and evermore walk worthy of the high vocation to which we are called in him. And finally, O God, give us, we beseech Thee, in all our trials, and in the hour of death, the good comfort of this hope, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

RELIGION A NECESSITY.

BY REV. RICHARD EDDY. SCRIPTURE LESSON, II CORINTHIANS V.

It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.—DEUT. xxxii. 47.

MOSES, obedient to the divine command, led the children of Israel to the plains of Moab, and under the shadow of the mountains of Gilead, sang to them the Prophetic song which all men of culture have united in declaring to be one of the finest and most grand of all human compositions.

In it he announces the judgment of God, and shows its conformity to, and dependence on, the laws revealed from Sinai, and the commands which had been given from time to time during their journey through the wilderness.

Concluding this song, he anew implores them to remember and to keep the words which he had testified to them, giving as the reason of his anxiety, the declaration connected with our text: "For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

A solemnity of more than ordinary interest attaches to these words, as uttered by Moses. The importance of the truth which they communicated, as manifest in all the history of that wonderful people, is increased when we consider the immediate and peculiar circum-

stances surrounding him who spoke them. At the waters of Meribah, where the people, being in great distress, murmured against God, Moses had failed in the discharge of his duty to heaven, and in consequence the word of the Lord had gone forth, that Moses should have no part in possessing the land beyond Jordan.

That river now rolled before him, and here he must part with his people. Deeply solicitous for their future peace and prosperity, but warned by the sad experience of the past, his words were hopeful, but sad, and as he lifted up his hands to pronounce his last blessing on them, he spoke it in words that reminded them of their disobedience, as well as of their glowing prospects, and that placed before them the strongest incitements to loyalty and duty.

Leaving them, with his blessing, Moses, at the command of God, ascended Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, its highest peak, and there, his vision blessed with the rich landscape of the Promised Land,—"Gilead, with its deep valleys and forest-covered hills, Dan, with its rich plains and pastures, Judah, with its rocky heights, and Jericho, with its palm-trees and rose-gardens,"—the Statesman and Law-giver of Israel breathed his last. A most magnificent and fitting death-bed, its scenery as varied and as grand as had been his own life! They buried him in darkness and silence, no man knowing the place of his grave unto this day.

Onward from this time, we trace in the history of the Hebrews a confirmation of the truth of our text. It was not in vain that God had given them a law; every vicissitude of their experience proved its

necessity, and its power. When obedient, they possessed the land in peace, and plenty crowned their labors. When disobedient, the God whom they professed to serve, thwarted their plans, and strewed terror and anguish in their path. It was impossible for them not to feel either His pleasure or His frown.

I need consume no time in specifying examples of this. Possibly your own recollections of the history of this people will furnish an abundance of instances. The Old Testament abounds with them, and the success of the religion of the New dates from the most striking and impressive of all.

There were days of most happy prosperity, there were also seasons of dismay and want, and the only reason that can be assigned for these varying conditions, is, that in the one case they kept the law of God, and in the other they forgot His commands, and rebelled against Him.

The laws to which we here refer, as declared by Moses to be no vain thing, but the source of life, embrace a much wider range than that contained in ordinary legislation. They not only provided for what is ordinarily termed the political government of the nation, but for all its domestic and family duties, and for all that pertained to the doctrines and ceremonies of religion. Every law had its religious significance, and was based on the will of God as King and Saviour. In this respect, the Hebrew government is the only one after which, in principle and intention, the nations of the earth can with safety copy.

God is King, whether men will acknowledge it or not, and it is His righteous will and law that must be

supreme in the earth, despite all customs, institutions, and diplomacy. Men may choose to obey, or to disobey, but the execution of His purpose, the consequences of obedience, or of rebellion, are beyond our choice, and belong to Him who, in the history of Israel, and in the workings of His Providence in all nations, teaches us that His will must be done, in earth, as in heaven.

It will follow from this, the religious basis of the Hebrew government, that it was more of religion itself, as giving its sanction to their laws, and determining their character, than of any particular command, that the words of our text were spoken. In proof of its appropriateness in such an interpretation, we might refer not alone to the history of the children of Israel, but to all history and biography, to our own experience and consciousness. It is as true of ourselves, individually, as of any, and we may therefore, in what we shall further say at this time, consider it in its application to ourselves.

RELIGION is not a vain thing to us, because it is our life. It is not a useless thing to any man, but the source of life to the world.

This is a broad and universal proposition, but the affirmation is clearly warranted by an abundance of facts.

First in place and importance, as attesting this truth, is the nature in man demanding religion, and alone finding room for exercise in it. For man is as much a religious being as he is a thinking being, and one faculty is as real as another. The mood and expression of each may be determined by education and culture, but back of all training and artificial in-

citement, is the nature in man fitted for religious expression. Of itself it is no more infallible than any other faculty, nor is it any more artificial, nor in its way any more liable to abuse, than others. Revelation is not given to create it, any more than logic is systematized to produce intellect, but to direct in the best use of it. Priests have perverted it to do the bidding of fanaticism, and of downright impiety; but so have sophists persuaded themselves into the belief of lies, and drawn others into their support and advocacy, on nearly every subject within the province of reason; so have quacks poisoned the human body, and thousands have been duped by them into practices that have shortened and destroyed life.

We do not say, because of this, that the intellectual nature and craving of man is wholly fictitious, or that the demand for nourishment and health is artificial: Why then should we assume that man's religious faculty is not natural and in-born?

We have the most positive proof that it is what we have assumed it to be, in the fact that man, wherever found, is a religious being. The form of the expression differs, but expression, of some kind, there is everywhere. The nations of most gentle blood are roused to enthusiasm in their devotions and worship, and the most fierce and war-like tribes lay down their arms, and quell their savage passions, before the altar. Even oppressors, who fear not man, tremble in the presence of an invisible power, and grant to the fear of the gods, what could not be drawn from them by any of the appeals of humanity. In gorgeous palaces, and the busy marts of traffic, man instinctively wor-

ships something, no less than in the hovels of poverty, or the wilds of the untrodden wilderness.

So universal is this truth, that no nation has ever furnished an exception. When French Infidelity was at its height, some boasted that the New Hollanders proved the exception, as they had no idea whatever of the future, and no belief in immortality; but subsequent investigations have shown that they are no exception to the dominion of this universal religious principle. They worship the shades of the departed, and seek to propitiate them by magic arts.

Accepting these facts, and what follows? Nothing less, surely, than that religion, which furnishes the sustenance to this nature, is not a vain or useless thing. That its mission is natural, legitimate, and necessary. That inasmuch as it provides for an in-born want, it is our life and strength. What knowledge is to the intellect, what food is to the body, religion is to the faculty in man which pants for faith and immortality.

That some men reject it, and consider it a mere device for keeping man in restraint, proves nothing against its necessity; it is only analogous to other equally strange anomalies. Besides: there are very few, perhaps none, who are wholly consistent and honest in their infidelity. None indeed who were born infidels. None who have not confessed to the feeling of faith, of awe, and of religious need, at some time. Their death-beds, at least, have shown, that, call it by what name they will, superstition or priest-craft, something within has demanded religion, and religious offices.

Hume, it is true, dispelled the thoughts of death

by frivolous amusements, but no one can call it a rational way of going out of the world. Many of the English infidels, however, were unwilling to live without the pale of the church, and were anxiously solicitous to enjoy the benefits of its ritual in the hour of death. Rousseau, though he assayed to reason himself and others out of all religious faith, never could entirely rid himself of the impressions of his childhood. Often, when alone and heart-stricken, he felt the need of religious sentiments and principles, and his writings are full of involuntary tributes, often of thrilling eloquence, to the power and worth of spiritual truth. Even Voltaire suspected, towards the close of his life, that he might have been in error, and in his last hours of sickness kept himself continually surrounded by priests, and clung with childlike superstition to the outward forms of religion.

We may safely say, such is the variety of life's experiences, such the character of the vicissitudes that try us in every part, that no man, whatever his professions, ever lived utterly destitute of religious thought. At some time he must have felt that religion was not useless, but that something within craved it as its necessity and life.

A second proof of the proposition which, as we have said, grows out of our text, will be found in the fact that the religious faculty is not only natural to man, but that it also exerts the most powerful influence over us, and governs our actions and feelings more than others. We have anticipated this position, in much that has already been said, but it is deserving of more special notice.

It is an important point, not only in showing that

religion is not artificial and unnecessary to man, but also in removing one of the most formidable barriers which many religious errorists have placed in the way of true spiritual development. For if it be true that all men have a religious nature, and we can also show that this nature exercises the greatest influence over them, it will follow that however crude and mistaken many of its manifestations may be, man is not naturally so averse to God, and to good, as many of the theories of men would teach us, and that religion is not something that man is to get, supernaturally, but that which, already possessing, he needs Revelation to direct him in the right use of.

Now, is it not evident to all, without summoning many facts in the order of proof, that whether we take the lowest form of superstition, the grossest display of fanaticism, or the most rational and least outward display of faith, men are more in subjection to their religious faculties than to all others?

Where shall we open the world's history, and not find proof of this? The Hindoo mother loves her child with an affection that cannot be questioned,—she shields it from danger, she watches over it in sickness, she suffers keenly when she cannot alleviate its pains,—but, at the bidding of her priest, she takes it to the bank of the river, and throws it into the jaws of the crocodile.

She loves her own life as ardently as do those who are more enlightened, but, obedient to the dictates of her religion, she throws herself on the funeral-pile beside her husband, and is consumed by the flames.

The Greeks prided themselves on their polished refinement, but most of all on the infallible authority of

the Oracles, nor would they undertake any important work, if the Oracle spoke not in its favor.

The Romans depended on the strength of their right arm, but their trust was in the gods who fought with them, and their faith in the Augurs exceeded all else, and they obeyed them in all things.

The Indians recognize the Great Spirit in all things, and every place or event of more than ordinary significance and interest, was dignified by them with some name or title that signified His presence, beauty, or power. His smile on their councils made them strong for battle, but His breath, sending the smoke and flame of their fire in any direction but the one desired, was a warning against the proposed action, which the bravest dared not disobey.

Turning from these to the believers in Revelation, we find, in every sect, proof of our position. The Jew, even when rebellious, was not accused of want of faith, but of want of faith in God. He was led astray from the worship of the Real and Supreme, into the worship of Idols; but it was his religious nature which led him, and to that he yielded, blindly and wickedly, I grant, but none the less through its instrumentality, and obedient to its bidding.

Even our Saviour did not accuse the Samaritans of being irreligious, but of worshipping "they knew not what."

On the other hand, we need not dwell at length on the thousands who have felt that Christianity was dearer than fame, success, or life itself, and have gone to the martyr's death, singing brave and lofty hymns. Their memories are so richly embalmed that we need but refer to them, and they must ever be regarded

as witnesses to the place and strength of the religious faculty in man.

Shall we seek for further proof, we have only to turn our eyes within, and though we may make no display of any of the forms of religion, we will convince ourselves that the faculty exists, and it is more imperative in its demands, severer in its obligations, and richer in its compensation, than all else. It strives with all, and suggests the way of duty; it points to God in the time of trouble, and directs to the source of consolation in the day of bereavement. When heeded, it makes all radiant with its smile; and when neglected, inflicts the sharpest stings.

Or, if we look in another direction, what proof of its place and power do we behold in the existence and zeal of sects, and in the restless seeking and experiments of those who have settled on no form of faith, but whose unsatisfied nature urges them to seek a place of rest? They cannot be deaf to its bidding, although they may mistake in the object which they choose.

This last thought leads me to remark, in conclusion, that Religion, being thus real and necessary, should, in order to be of profit to us and a blessing to our life, be well-grounded as to its character and proof.

What we most need, and what Revelation was designed to give, is the right tone and direction to religion. The faculty resting in ourselves, it must be moulded from without, and will take on whatever form our circumstances and education fashion for it.

We have seen how it has been fashioned in others, what different forms it has taken, as illustrative of the varied agencies which have been instrumental in pro-

ducing it. It is now highly important for us to ask, What will give it the best form, and make it the greatest blessing to *us?*

We answer, the volume of Divine Revelation, as interpreted by reason, and illustrative of the Theology taught by the Son of God. It was for this that God spake by the Prophets, and for this that He sent His Son.

It is this, most of all, that man needs. A well-grounded and well-proven theology, is the only pattern after which our religion can be formed to be an object of delight and a source of peace. In that of which we have spoken, the theology illustrated by Christ's life and ministry, there is the most worthy and glorious view of God's relation and purpose, His Providence and Love, His character and government; and the only safe direction for the conduct and duties of life, together with abundant consolation and strength. It is the relation, purpose, providence, love, character and government of a FATHER. The duties required, are those which children and brethren alone can discharge; the consolation and strength, such as an Almighty and loving Father can impart to His children, the objects of His love, and whose happiness alone can redound to His glory.

Let us turn to this, as illustrated in every feature in the life and mission of Jesus, and we shall find it as well adapted to our wants as it was glorified in him, and made a buckler and a shield against every temptation and sorrow. It will not be a vain thing for us, as the experience of those who have tested its worth, will abundantly show. It will shine into the mystery of life, give strength for the discharge of its

duties, and make the valley of the shadow of death radiant with the presence of the Risen Redeemer. It will best fit us, too, for the discharge of every duty to God and to man. Assuring us of the possession of strength to perform all that is required of us, it encourages every effort, and mocks no rising aspiration, by the cry of inability and impotence.

It is, in short, all that we need, and manifests its great necessity by its complete fitness.

Let us accept it, for it is our life, our guide, our comfort, and our hope. Under its guidance, we may alone safely conduct our business, legislate for others, and look aright on the woes and oppressions that afflict our kind. Illuminated by it in the example of Christ, we may walk amid all the ills and strive against all the wrongs of life, strong to suffer and to do the will of God.

Let us accept it! Its comforts rest on the glorious assurance that God cannot err, and will not be unkind,—and that even the dead live unto Him. Its hopes are based on Him who cannot lie, and will only end in fruition when He is All in All.

Let us accept it! The strength which we need for the discharge of all duties, the faith we all crave, the hope and comfort, without which we cannot live, all assure us that "It is no vain thing for us, because it is our life."

*LET US PRAY.

THOU, LORD, art the Source of all blessing. Thou openest Thy hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing; and the needs of Thy creatures, and the sup-

plies of Thy providence, are alike the proofs and the illustrations of Thine infinite goodness.

Yet do we specially praise and adore Thee for the in-born necessities of the soul, and for the grace which grants unto us the bread of heaven and the water of eternal life. Fain would we feel the increasing power of an inward yearning for all that is truly divine, and be drawn into fellowship with the Redeemer and the redeemed. Mercifully help us, we beseech Thee, and keep us continually in Thy fear and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

CHRISTIAN MIRACLES.

BY REV. CHAS. W. TOMLINSON. SCRIPTURE LESSON, JOHN IX.

. Lo, I am with you always.—MATTHEW XXVIII. 20.

CHRISTIANITY never grows old. It is as fresh to-day, and comes with as much power to the soul, as when first its truths were unfolded to Jews upon Olivet, or reached the hearts of disciples in the shades of Gethsemane.

Other religions have their foundations in the past, and are sanctified chiefly by the lapse of time: Christianity has its base in the ever-living present. Other systems point to their holy places — their temples, their altars, and their tombs—their Moriahs, their Sinais, and their Meccas: Christianity directs us not to the decaying or the dead, but to the breathing and throbbing of every-day life.

True, it has its waters of Galilee, its Siloam and Kedron,—its Bethlehem, Nazareth and Bethany. But not upon any of these does it depend for its existence, nor from any of these does it derive important sustenance. It is a significant fact, that even the localities of its most sacred histories have been lost in the lapse of ages. Gethsemane indeed remains, and the devout Christian loves to tread its hallowed sod, and commune with the Unseen beneath its ancient boughs. But the places of the transfiguration, of the crucifixion, and the tomb among the rocks, are veiled in

uncertainty. There are many conjectures concerning these, but no evidence which can bring conviction to the inquisitive.

We have no parchment written by the hand of Jesus, which Christians may make pilgrimages to behold. We have no lineal posterity of our Master, to revere for the kindred blood flowing in their veins, and to lead our minds back, as along a connected chain, to the Great Teacher. Indeed, there is nothing in the whole system of Christianity, either in its doctrines or its outward institutions, to make it, in any measure, the religion of an antiquated age. Even the only sacrament which Jesus instituted shows us a living Head, with whom we are in direct communication. In nothing material do we find the thread by which, mainly, we are connected with the Author and Finisher of our faith. Every Christian believer, in every age, draws his spiritual life directly from the great Fountain-head of the Church.

This is the import of all the prophecies and the promises. Jesus, it was declared, should remain an operative and quickening spirit upon the earth, until the completion of his universal mission. Jewish envy and fear might nail him to the cross; adversaries might rejoice to hear his dying groans, and see his lifelesss form carried to its resting-place; but the JESUS who so lately labored in their streets, and prayed for humanity in the garden, when slumber was upon those for whom he prayed, was not crucified, dead and buried. *That* Jesus yet lived—yet saw the degradation of man—yet felt for human woes—yet yearned for the regeneration of God's children—

yet labored for the uplifting of the depraved and sorrowing.

The drama was not closed by the enactment of this tragedy. It was only rendered more sublime in its parts, and more thrilling in its effects. "It is finished," opened a spring of spiritual power which else had been for ever closed—a fountain that should flow to the remotest generations of time. The earth drank the blood which flowed from his wounded side, and became vital with the spirit of The Crucified.

I have said that Christianity has no favored individuals, and no favored age. Prophets foretold it as a kingdom of continual spiritual communion. Its promises, as given from the lips of its Founder, told of a nearness to all ages and all climes. The fundamental principle of its activity, in all hearts and all generations, is that truth spoken by the well of Jacob, "God is a Spirit." Being a Spirit, there can be no absence of God—no place where the voice of penitence or of need will not be heard. Temples are not indispensable to worship. No mountains, no vales, no groves, can be supremely sacred to His presence.

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," said the blessed Saviour. Though by the tents of Edom, or where pagan oracles give forth their predictions,—though amidst the descendants of Ham, or where the blood of nobles courses in the veins,—"there am I in the midst of them," when my name is honored and my blessing sought.

"Lo, I am with you always." On the banks of the

Nile, no less than by the waters of Jordan—on the seven hills of the city of empires, no less than on Moriah's top, though smoking with unnumbered sacrifices—dwells this Presence. "Lo, I am with you always:" A spirit that hears the faintest cryings of the human soul—ministers to the wants of the sorrowing—notices each earnest struggle against the world's only oppressor—answers each pleading for strength to overcome the might of the adversary—and refreshes the heart which pants after God. "Lo, I am with you always,"—to conquer the world by truth and love—to establish righteousness—to cause governments to seek the good of the people—to promote an enduring peace—to knit the hearts of men in an universal brotherhood—and to make all men feel their spiritual relationship to the Supreme Being.

To-day, no less than yesterday—at this moment, as certainly as when the spirit of Christ was breathed upon the hearts of the first believers—is it a living, glorious, quickening truth, that is declared in the text: "I am with you always." On the seeker after righteousness, in the midst of this nineteenth century, rests this presence, as actively and effectively as it dwelt in the assembly of the disciples, in the earliest ages of the Church. We are as near to God as they were, if only we have as much of his spirit active in our lives. Jesus is as really present to our souls as he was to theirs, if we live as constantly as *they* lived in the communion of his love. And he may be *nearer* to us. He may be to us more of a realized spirit than he was to *them*, if we enter more fully into his character, and better fulfil the command to be imitators of God.

I have no sympathy with the sentiment which divorces Christ from his Church in the present day. I have no sympathy with the theology which makes orphans and outcasts of the Christian disciples of one age, while it receives those of another age into closest fellowship with heaven. I have no affinity for that habit of the Church, which finds the exclusive, or even the chief, evidences of Christianity in the facts of its earliest history; in the assurance, namely, that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John did actually write the books which are severally ascribed to them. The Koran and the Zendavesta may be worthless without such endorsers; but Christianity must not depend merely upon the external history, however reliable, of any books or parchments. It can never, with such proof alone, or with such proof as its principal evidence, engage the heart, and banish doubt, and inspire unwavering trust.

Jesus must not be to us a person annihilated in the far distance of generations gone—a being who lived, and thought, and acted, and died, in the remote past, his work finished, and his power taken away from the earth. He must be a Saviour who is yet a quickening spirit—who is living, beholding, feeling, doing, saving, in the present—who never died, but changed only the mode of his action; removing, indeed, beyond our mortal vision, but ever visible to the eye of the yearning spirit.

Such a Saviour, such a Christianity, I behold declared upon the pages of Divine Revelation. We are not there told of a Christianity which had its greatest glory in its primitive age, and then declined

into the merest sentiment,—a Christianity whose disciples were for ever to walk with faces turned to the past. The Christianity revealed to us was to brighten and gather glory with its age; to acquire power as it should roll on through unfolding generations; to exhibit greater and still greater trophies, as the centuries should be numbered; and plant its standard in the very age in which it should seek for conquest.

Certainly it is no unjust requirement of a religion, that it should produce its evidence at the period in which it challenges belief. Religion has to do with the dearest, closest interests, the most secret hopes, the profoundest experiences of the soul. It is the one great need, felt with more or less constancy by all. Without it, all else is worthless. It, alone, renders life endurable. Even such as are unconscious of the fact, have never been without its direct or indirect influences.

Jesus turned water into wine. He fed the multitude by miracle. He raised the dead. All this I do most religiously believe. These, and such as these, were the testimonials of his authority, which the grossness of that age demanded. Nothing less sensuous could have been appreciated at that time. And perhaps at any time, the inauguration of such a religion would have demanded much the same kind of evidence. But such evidence would not suffice for *all* time. Those who cavil at Christianity, because its disciples do not now heal the sick and send the lame man leaping on his way, would not, themselves, rest content with a religion whose perpetual evidences were chiefly of this sort,—even though only its disci-

ples could work them, and there appeared no limitation to *their* power in that direction. They would not be long in attributing such works to legerdemain, if unaccompanied by, or if not greatly subordinate to, higher and more spiritual, inner and more comprehensible development of power. The former may arrest attention, force the triple gates of prejudice, and check the sneer of bigotry; but only the latter can strengthen opinion into belief, and hope into faith.

Accordingly, Christian miracles have not ceased. They have only changed from a material to a spiritual form; and from a transient to an enduring character. They have only assumed a form more in keeping with the essential nature of Christianity. Some of them are now less palpable than of old, to the merely sensuous gaze; but they possess a power of conviction, of conversion, and of true sanctification, of which the early miracles of the Saviour were unavoidably destitute. They appeal now, not, as of old, directly to the marvelous, but to the deepest and holiest affections of the heart, and to the loftiest powers of the understanding.

What more truly miraculous could there be in the realm of physical operation, than is exhibited, spiritually, when Christianity makes the heart of culture, of refinement, and of tenderest affection, bow submissively in bereavement, without blunting any of its sensibilities? All of you have witnessed this. You have all seen the husband, the wife, the parent, in whose heart every finer natural affection had been maturely cultivated, whose very life was bound up in the object of love, deprived in an instant of that

object; and you have then seen the countenance lit up with a heavenly trust, which smiled through tears, giving evidence that though the waters were deeply moved and tempest-tossed, there was a lower depth where all was calm.

Ask not, then, where are the modern evidences of Christianity! Ask not to behold the sight of the blind renewed, or the widow's only son restored to life. Here is a miracle such as the Master never wrought in those early days, before his truth had had time to do its work upon the soul. Here is a miracle such as cannot be found beyond the pale of Christendom. In Judaism, in Paganism even, you may find affection meeting its bereavement in hardened forgetfulness. But only Christianity can effect a submission to Providence which does not at the same time do violence to the natural feelings,—which does not at the same time forbid the free flowing of love, and the constant cherishing of the heart's fondest memories.

Death comes, and with relentless hand snaps the silver cord. We instinctively cling to life, and shrink from its termination. Passion or care may drown this sense for a season, but they cannot destroy it. Yet, with that love in its greatest intensity, we may be educated to meet death without a murmur. With heroic firmness we may bare our bosoms to the fatal shaft. Like the savage, we may meet it without a single pulse disturbed. Thus far we may triumph over death, with no light from heaven, and caring for none. But it is the triumph of the baser passions—the triumph of scorn, of hate, or of honor.

Christianity alone can give us a nobler victory in the hour of earth's sorest trial. It alone can disarm

death of its terrors, without blinding us. It alone can bring us down to the shores of the dark river, and enable us to embark with serene cheerfulness. It alone can enable us to feel the Father's hand guiding us across the dark waters, or gently leading us through the land of shadows. By its aid, the naturally timid become strong in the presence of death—strong, not to defiance, but strong to resignation.

If you have ever witnessed—and who has *not* witnessed?—one who in health was ardently attached to life,—attached to friends and shrinking from separation,—attached to society and loving to mingle in its scenes,—such an one brought low by sickness in the meridian of his days,—the hectic flush upon the cheek, plainly telling that health would nevermore return,—with slow-moving step, and daily slower, passing only as a looker-on among the scenes in which formerly he took so active a part; and then pillowed in the easy chair, dependent for his every wish upon the kind offices of others; daily expecting the final summons—a summons delayed through weeks and months: Yet all this privation, all this suffering, all this suspense, endured not only with a martyr's fortitude, but with a sublime reliance upon Providence,—with a firm and holy trust in the unfailing goodness of the hand which proffers the bitter cup, whilst not denying its bitterness; with the calm assurance that life shall stretch on beyond the tomb, and over the boundless future, bringing reunions of kindred and loved ones, bringing bliss pure and overflowing; and at last behold the closing scene, as you have seen the sun go down, in a golden glory: If you have ever witnessed this, you have witnessed a miracle wrought

by the spirit of Christ, of greater solemnity and joy than any which surprised the gaze of Jew or Gentile, in the earthly labors of the Master. You have then seen that which neither Paganism nor Rationalism ever exhibited. To Christianity alone belongs the power to produce that calm endurance of death, which does not need to dispense with deep tenderness, nor render the subject insensible to physical pain. And in this consists another of the perpetual evidences of our holy religion.

Passing from its influence upon the individual, to its effects upon society, we again witness its multiplied and multiplying miracles. That there are sore and untold evils in the best social system, is but too true. Yet take Christian society in its worst estate, and none but the blinded skeptic can deny that it is incomparably superior to any other in its best. You may find evils there, which others do not exhibit; but you will discover that those evils are incidental to the very changes for good which Christianity produces. They are not necessary parts of those changes, but grow out of the less perfect work of Christian truth upon some than upon others, within the same circle of social or political relations. From the same cause, Jesus declared that he had not come to bring peace, but a sword, inasmuch as the indirect effect of his ministry would be the forcible overthrow of the Jewish State and Church.

Leaving these, behold what Christianity has done for society! Paganism in its best estate—Paganism in the palmiest days of Greece and Rome, produced only a condition of gilded social corruption. It cul-

tivated the arts and sciences, indeed, but it made them minister almost solely to the sensuous. As it became polished, it parted with manly grace and sank into the effeminate. But Christianity, whilst, as we have seen, it calls out the finest sympathies of the soul, and renders tender all the affections, at the same time nerves and stimulates the soul to great endeavors, involving the highest personal endurance. While it teaches submission to the allotments of Providence, it girds to labor for the eradication of existing evils, and the introduction of every social benefit. Civilization is its inevitable product.

Wherever the masses are educated, Christianity has done it, and wherever general education is most thorough, Christianity is the most developed. Wherever science has shed more than the feeblest light, there Christianity has been at work dispelling the clouds. Wherever nature is most subordinated to the noblest interests of humanity, wherever agriculture is lifted above the merest brute drudgery, wherever mind governs more than physical force, wherever the newspaper has a name to exist, wherever the arts have been carried beyond the rudest attempts, wherever railroads and telegraphs are made the iron-nerves of sympathies and a common interest, wherever a high-school or college worthy of the name is to be found,—there Christianity is, at least nominally, the ruling force. Christianity has gone before all these, and it has produced them,—evidently produced them, for they are never found where it is not. Perhaps it did not go before them except in its crudest interpretations, such as the condition of the community fitted it to receive; but in some form it has every-

where preceded such progress, and the common interpretation given it has improved with the general advancements which it has prompted,—and this improved interpretation has again reacted upon society to its benefit.

Paganism had its pyramids and its sphinx, its gigantic tombs cut in the solid rock, and its temples rising to sublime proportions. But labor was not dignified in those stupendous works. They did not elevate the laborer nor improve the condition of humanity. Slaves carved those rocks and upreared those massive piles, to flatter the vanity of kings. At the distance of so many centuries, we blush to own the blending of so many beings into the existence of a few, to promote so ignoble an end!

Where other religions have held sway, there has been many a Congress of War, where kings have plotted with kings for the overthrow of States and the enslavement of Nations. But where was held their Congress of Peace, to induce the powers of the earth to employ the olive-branch in preference to the sword? When did they furnish an Industrial Congress of Nations? Where are their Crystal Palaces for the enthronement of Labor?

These things belong to the nineteenth century of Christian advancement. They are the peculiar glories of the religion of Jesus, looking toward the highest moral achievements for the race. And they are but the outward results of the inward workings of that religion. No one can doubt the affirmation of the historian Bancroft, that "every century of the Christian Church is less corrupt, and less in bondage than its predecessor. In the present age, the sum

total of spiritual knowledge, as well as of liberty, is greater, and less mixed with error, than ever before."

These, then, are the miracles which its maturer years have substituted for the merely gross and material wonder-workings with which it first astonished the world. These are the evidences of its truth which it is daily producing to convince the unbeliever, and these are precisely what the world, in their absence, would demand of a religion, however it might continue to display its power to heal the maladies of the bodily man. These prove that God is with it, and in it.

"Lo, these are only parts of His ways: how little a portion is yet heard of Him!" These have been performed when as yet Christianity can claim but a feeble hold upon the heart or intellect of mankind. These are what it has done in its youth. God is with it always; and in its manhood it shall develop nobler works in testimonial of its truth—grander miracles as vouchers for its heavenly origin.

LET US PRAY.

O THOU, whose truth maketh free! We praise Thee that Thou hast been pleased to reveal that truth unto man. We give Thee thanks that Thou didst send Thy Son to teach the world the way of life. How can we be sufficiently grateful for all the blessings which his spirit has conferred upon us! Thy likeness has grown in our souls by his power; our communion with Thee has been augmented; and our lives are constantly illumined by his knowledge.

The world reflects Thy great glory, and gives promise of the coming of the time when Thy laws shall have conferred spiritual liberty upon all. O, make us more true to Thee, and to our exalted privileges! Increase our faith; enlarge our love of all Thine erring children; kindle our zeal; and make us worthy to be called disciples of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

LIFE AN ASCENT.

BY REV. CHARLES H. LEONARD. SCRIPTURE LESSON, MATTHEW XVII.

Friend, go up higher. LUKE xiv. 10.

THESE words occur in the record which Luke makes of the Parable of the Supper. The story was invented to reprove and instruct the Pharisees, who were haughty, and thought themselves better than other men. The central doctrine of the discourse of Jesus, at this time, is, that a *lowly* spirit is the most *exalted* spirit. The portrait is given, of a man, who, without any thought that the deed is a sign of a lowly temper, takes an humble position at the feast to which he was invited.

It requires but little effort of the imagination to bring up a scene so frequent in the eastern world; and the reference, in the simple history, to a man of substance and character, is so plain, that we easily separate him from all the rest of the company. The unostentatious good man is put in such strong contrast with another person, who presses into the highest rooms and crowds himself upon the notice of the host, that we easily construct him,—and are not surprised when we see him led to some place of honor.

If we could have here, to-day, my friends, suddenly appearing upon these walls, the picture of that ancient scene of the feast, the interior of the Oriental palace, the gathered guests, and the poor, wise man, seated

by the master of the house, it would be but a faint representation at the best, of what Jesus declared to be true—namely, that "whoso humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Let us protect our minds, however, against any misconception about this truth. There must be a certain elevation of soul, of which the elevated seat is the symbol, which makes the conduct of the man who at first seeks out an humble place, natural, spontaneous. The character in the parable would quickly lose all manly qualities, if we supposed it wanting in this naturalness and spontaneity. The character is lovely, attractive, and held up for the world's admiration and imitation, because the real seat of honor was in his soul. He did not think anything about the low seat as a mark of a true inward temper, but took it because he easily gravitated towards it. The moral and spiritual greatness of the man impelled him to do as he did, and thus it was, that his conduct expressed his inward nobleness.

The man who carries spiritual elevation with him, magnificent heights which he can reach in any moment of thought or real communion, will show, without effort to do so, that he cares but little for place and condition. The sublime of his soul, and the grandeur within, exceed all other sublimity; and no seat can be so high on earth, and for *him* in heaven, as his own exalted spirit. Indeed, there will always be an exact correspondence between the world within and the world without—the seat *here*, and the seat *there*—and he can wander in no garden of the angels which will be anything more than the reflection of his own inner world; and can ascend no slopes

of great eternity which will be anything more than types of that soul's growth, into which heaven has already sent its peace and beauty.

Beyond the lesson of Christian greatness, then, which, ages ago, the parable of the Saviour illustrated for men who knew not the meaning of sacrifice and denial, it implies the truth, everywhere recognized in the New Testament, that, by force of spiritual gravity, souls go to their own place, rising to the highest seats, or falling to the lowest depressions, according to the predominance of the heavenly or the earthly within them.

But those men who listened to the words of Jesus have passed from the earth; the single dwelling where a feast was made in far-off Judea, has widened into the dimensions of the world; the invited guests have now become all souls of men and angels; and the master's words, "Friend, go up higher," translate the meaning of the Universal Presence.

We shall not violate the spirit of an ancient occasion, nor clothe the words of my text with too great authority, if we take them as the utterance of the love that speaks from above, and of the soul that speaks within us.

Mere *existence* is a dead level, but true *life* is an ascent. All persons exist, very few persons absolutely live. Most of us in this world, perhaps, are content with things as we find them, and with ourselves as the days and years go by and shape us. We all have momentary pain at the core of life, that we are no better, no wiser, no more self-reliant, no more trustful; and yet we are practically heedless of the great concerns of thought and faith. At some new turn in the journey of life, we resolve to be more faithful to

opportunities, and to heed more the voices of the stronger natures who walk by our side, and to respond in good deeds to the call that is sent back over the way, from those who have gone on, and gone up,—but some coarser voice fills our ears, or some thick veil of the world drops down between *us* and the shining ones beyond and above,—and we remain as we are, rather taking some backward path, or drifting towards eternity.

We say we have no time to grow better,—no time to read, meditate, and pray, that all our vitality is exhausted in the care of our outward life, that even Sunday, the seventh portion of our time, which we would gladly use for the noblest purposes of worship, and thought, and benevolent deeds, finds us too tired for its joys and its employments, that we really have no time left for the best side of our natures, and that we must wait till we are lifted out of this struggling world, before we can be real, and do nobly.

Yes, but we forget that the good God has set us all to school amid these common things, which were designed for implements to be used by brave souls, and not as barriers to all success, in achieving the true victory. God has put no rock of difficulty in our pathway, which He has not given us strength to change into a stepping-stone. The world is crowded with instruments, and they are all for our training in the most real life. The tools lie all around us. But if instead of using them to fashion our souls after the model of all good and grace, we only mar the image of the divine that is within us, we surely ought not to find fault with them, but with our own skill in using them.

In the best Book in the world, a story is told of one who fell asleep under the watching stars, with no other pillow than some stones which he had piled up. But in the night he had a vision of angels ascending and descending from earth to heaven. When he waked, he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." And yet all was the same in appearances as when he lay down. The stones were the same; the ground the same; the sky and the light the same. The change was not in *them*, but in *him*.

So is it now. I do not hesitate to say that God is in all these things, which we allow in numerous instances to hang as weights upon us. And there are more angels than the patriarch Jacob saw, and more than we have dreamed of, ascending and descending, carrying our thoughts and feelings up to heaven, and bringing thought and affection down to us. For, every day, every hour, every moment, is an angel, if we will only so accept it. Every privilege, every blessing, every friend, every thought that comes into the mind, every thrill of love in the heart, even every trial, every sorrow, is an angel. Sometimes in one, sometimes in another garb they come, but the character and the mission are always the same. Angels are they still, or, what is the same thing, messengers of good, if we will only open the door to them, and allow them to come in and dwell with us.

The truth is, the real character and the real use of many things, will be better understood by us all, when we "go up higher."

Many of us, I dare say, are positively annoyed by the recurrent care of daily life. We not only com-

plain that our material concerns fill up the avenues which thought and prayer only can keep open; that our eyes are so constantly bent upon the week-day task, that we get no time to turn them inward and upward. We are restless and impatient; the looks of our fellow-men disturb us; the play of little children, which should be to men, which is to God, a psalm of thanksgiving, irritates; and the whole moving of the world chafes against our souls. We will to have it otherwise. We think it very foolish to be so troubled about trifles, and yet they continue to be an over-match for all our boasted energy and wisdom.

Now, what one in this condition most needs, is, *to grow superior* to the condition. A heavy wave of trouble will lift him out of all little ones, entirely above them, just as a struggling man who is whirled and tossed in the wash of the angry sea, is, by some tenth wave, cast far up on the beach, into safety.

When toiling along the dusty road, the pedestrian will often take to the field, or to a hill-top, where the winds are cool and the sight is glorious. This is what we must all do; we, I mean, who are annoyed by the dust and heat of the world. We must seek some grassier region, where the fever of life is not felt, and where all the harsh tumult of the world softens into music. We must go up higher. Not leave the world, but rise above all worldly care, by growth in a true life. Up in the sky there is a region always serene, where the storms that wreck our ships and rock our dwellings never reach; so, up, far up in the sphere of holy thought and calm feeling, reigns the quiet which is unbroken by any storm of earthly passion, and where the noise of striving men never

jars. We rise up to it, by erecting into scaffolding all the objects, pursuits, thoughts, feelings, experiences of life. . Thus, in *really* going up higher, do we climb beyond the reach of cares that annoy, and the disposition that filled life with murmuring and distrust.

I believe it true, also, of the estimate which many persons put upon questions which relate to guilt, and guilty men. What they need, in order to give a calmer verdict, a wiser, purer judgment, is, not argument, not proof from facts merely, nor chiefly, but to "go up higher." When a man begins to grow in the best, the most humane and benevolent sentiments of our nature, he at the same time begins to outgrow all hate and revenge, every low wish that is born in a moment of fear or excitement. Men will move away from an unchristian law, which requires "an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, life for life, blood for blood," just as they move towards God in their love, and towards *him* who said, "Bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you." Men do not stand high enough to see a whole humanity, and how solemn a thing it is to be *human.* They live too low down, and breathe too low a stratum of air. For man's sake, we all need to "go up higher."

For our *own* sakes, too, we must repeat once more—and in nothing so much, perhaps, as in the education of those powers which will make all doubts concerning another life, or rather, the immortal life which *is*, and always will be, impossible.

There are all sorts of doubters and sceptics. They are either unbelievers or disbelievers in the reality of a life over which death has no control. Now the

wonder is, not that they do *not* believe. The wonder would be if they *did*. They believe in the senses, because they have had experience with them. They believe in demonstrated truth for the intellect, because they have had experience with that. They do not believe in the higher realities of the spiritual life, because, simply, they have not had experience with them. They do not believe in the immortal life, because they have not found out yet, through an inward life, that they have immortal faculties. And they may think, and speculate, and argue about it till they drop into the grave; they may search all external evidence; and all the dead may come back and talk to them, but they will remain doubters still.

To no class of people does the utterance of the text come home with more power than to skeptics, and natural doubters. They live so low down, that the world which is bounded by the sky and these walls, seems the only world possible. They will never know anything different till they "go up higher."

A man who has toiled up a little from the base of a mountain, is charmed with the new world he sees. He says, "I see fields, orchards, lakes, rivers, woods, and a range of hills bounding all." But a braver friend who has gone further up, replies, "I see all *you* do, and more besides; for, beyond the hills that bound your picture, I see other plains, other woods, other streams, and, range on range, other mountains; and the further I go up, the more extensive the prospect, and the wider the horizon."

So it is in the true Life and knowledge of realities: The higher we go up, the more we see and the more we know. And it is by going up higher, or by growth

from within, that doubts are outgrown and made impossible.

As it is with doubts, so with inconsolable, hopeless grief. A selfish sorrow, that dwells on its loss, and is incapable of seeing anything but loss, needs to stand a little higher up, where it can see more. Bereavement that weeps over the new grave, will see beyond it when it rises with the translated soul and lives a heavenly life on the earth. Heaven must be very near to one who lives a pure and good life; and those whose forms we no longer see, whose words we no longer hear, cannot be far away from one whose heart is deep and fair.

This is the *nearness* I believe possible. We are near each other here this morning, not because of the outward proximity, but because we share in the same life of faith, and truth, and love. So are we near those who no longer dwell in the earthly form, just in proportion as we share the life they live. If our friends who have left the earth have more interest in truth, and love, and communion with the great Parent Soul, than they used to have, to be near them *we* must be truer, and holier. We must grow in the best life, as we feel they are growing. We must constantly go up higher. It is thus that the victory over death is gained, for death is thus virtually abolished, since, to the inward hearing of our souls, its message is no more dreadful, but has become the voice of an angel.

Every friend that goes from our arms, but obeys the direction of the heavenly spirit, "to go up higher." It is but one more step they take when they lay the burden of the body down. They do not die. The

body ceases to be informed by the soul that dwelt in, and illumined it. That is all there is of death. Those we loved, and all that made them lovely and dear, "go up higher." They live, and grow, and no more suffer, amid the immortal. We cannot ask to have them stay in these narrow houses, when a voice from above calls them away, and invites them to the heaven's completeness. In all high moments, we shall rather echo the words I have so often quoted, and bid the spirit good speed in its upward flight.

I confess to you, that there is nothing I feel so much like saying, when I hold the hand that is growing cold to the touch, as the language which has helped me to the few thoughts which I have now read you: "Friend, go up higher." And how much many of us owe for the emphasis which some pure and quiet life has given to these words of the text, it may not be right now to tell. We can feel, and live, what is too sacred for words. In a new and better way we can follow those whose gentleness and goodness we can never forget, and turning all things into helps to culture, walking in the path ennobled by so much faithfulness, and such disinterested goodness, move towards our rest.

LET US PRAY.

OUR FATHER who art in Heaven: Help us to look up to those who have gone before us, and to move towards them by living purer lives. We beseech Thee to assist us in our endeavors to draw nigh to Thee, who art all pure; and do Thou quicken

our souls into a life of growing goodness, through faith in Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour. May we look to him as our true Guide in the upward way, as the One who will keep us from falling utterly, and lead us safely and eternally.

We thank Thee for this hour of meditation; and grant, O God, that hereafter we may take new steps upward, and evermore ascend, attracted by Thy love, till we attain the freedom of that world where cease less labor is eternal rest. *Amen.*

WORK AND WAGES.

BY REV. M. BALLOU. SCRIPTURE LESSON, ROMANS VI.

——Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.—MATTHEW VI. 5.

THIS is what Christ said of the Scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrisy appears to have been their prevailing sin, and it received some of the severest reproofs which he ever administered. It was not their acts with which he found fault, but the motives by which they were actuated. And it would be well for us if we could always bear the fact in our thoughts, that it is not so much the words we may utter, or the deeds we may perform, that render us acceptable, or otherwise, in the sight of God, as it is the temper or spirit which underlies and gives tone to these.

The pharisaic acts alluded to in the context, were well enough, in themselves considered. Indeed, they would have been meritorious, if performed in a proper manner and from right motives. Prayer and almsgiving are certainly good and Christian practices, if conducted in this way. But as exhibited in the lives of those ancient religionists, they were chiefly the fruit of ostentation and self-righteousness.

What they gave was not so much from sympathy and sweet charity, as from the spirit of pride, and a love of vain display. Therefore it is said that they sounded a trumpet before them, in order to call public attention to their gifts.

Their prayers, too, were offensive for a similar

reason. These were not offered so much from an humble sense of want, or a devout recognition of their dependence, as from the spirit of self-conceit and vanity. They were not truly and spiritually religious, but were chiefly concerned in endeavors to appear so. They wished to be regarded as such in public estimation. And so they were said to pray long and loudly in the most public places, such as the synagogues and the corners of the streets, that men might see them, and that they might attract general attention and respect. In this manner they were actuated by base and unworthy motives; and it was this prevailing spirit of hypocrisy for which Christ condemned them, and against which he so earnestly warned his followers.

The particular fact, however, to which I wish to direct attention now, is comprised in the text, "Verily I say unto you, they have their reward:" that is, they obtained just what they wanted. They were seeking merely the vulgar applause of the world, and they received it, and this constituted their reward. Their *wages* corresponded to their *work*, both in kind and in degree.

It has seemed to me that this language was not applicable to the Pharisee and the hypocrite alone. If I mistake not, Christ here lays down a great principle—one of vital importance, and one equally applicable to all mankind. It embraces the primary law of Divine equity, which, however it may seem to be inoperative at particular times, is, nevertheless, unceasing in its activity, and metes out, sooner or later, equal and exact justice to every individual of our race.

I fear that there are many vague and loose opinions held upon this subject. In their thoughts, at least, men often separate very widely the rewards and punishments of the Divine government from the deeds which may deserve them. They are by no means generally regarded as being linked together in the very nature of things. Indeed, so entirely distinct and separate are they supposed to be, that either, it is thought, may exist without the other. Good might exist without its reward, and evil without its punishment. Especially is this true in regard to the latter particular.

Moral evil and its retribution are not thought to be necessarily connected. And so we are told that punishment may be either put off entirely to another state of existence, or, through penitence and forgiveness, never be really inflicted upon the sinner! These are very incorrect—they are very pernicious ideas. They imply that God's judgments are but an arbitrary exercise of His power; that He may visit them when and how He pleases, without regard to strict equity; or that He may withhold them entirely, even where they are most fully deserved.

Such notions have a bad influence upon the public mind. They taint the judgment and corrupt the moral sensibility. They are as false and destructive as the lights which the wrecker kindles upon the shore to lure the mariner on to peril. For just so far as the intuitive conviction is weakened, that sin can possibly be unpunished, so far does the thought of retribution lose its restraining power.

I would recall attention, therefore, to the principle involved in the text. I would have it reiterated, if

necessary, until the public mind shall lay hold of it as a reality. I would especially call the attention of the young to this fact—for never shall we have a pure or healthful morality while they are trained in the crude and vicious notions which now prevail upon this subject.

The great law of compensation runs through the entire sphere of moral existence. No good can go unrewarded: no evil can go unpunished. They exist in relations very similar to those of cause and effect in the material world, and are equally as inseparable. I consider the declaration of the text, therefore, as of universal application. It is not only true of those to whom Christ originally applied it, but it may be truly said of all men everywhere, whatever may be their moral condition, Verily, they have their reward. Be it of good, or of evil, it is equally the same. The work and the wages must go together; and even the great God himself cannot make it otherwise, but by a miraculous interference, and a sacrifice of equity. Punishment for the sinner is wholly unavoidable. No one can hope to evade it, any more than he can change the laws of his own being.

Consider, also, that standing in the relations which I have supposed, sin and its necessary punishment cannot be so very widely separated in point of time. True, there may be some cases, as the wise man intimates, in which sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily: still, in most instances, doubtless, the sinner's judgment does not linger nor his damnation slumber. The one cannot well exist here, and the other be postponed entirely to another state of existence. They are linked together by indissoluble

bonds. If there is good here, it must be attended with its full and proper recompense. If there is evil here, it must, of necessity, be accompanied by all the retribution which it can be supposed to merit in the view of infinite justice. This corresponds to the declaration of Jesus in the text: "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward." They have it now, in the present time. They reap the harvest from the same field in which they sow the seed.

Before proceeding to the proofs and illustrations of this fact, I would suggest a single consideration, which it is very necessary should be taken into the account, and which has probably had its influence in begetting and perpetuating the popular errors upon this subject. I allude to the fact that all which we enjoy, and all which we suffer, in this world, are by no means to be regarded either in the light of reward or punishment. A vague impression that they are, has helped to involve the matter in difficulty. Because, in this case, if one appears to enjoy more than another, and is not thought to deserve more; or, if one seems to suffer more, perhaps, than he is thought to merit,—it tends naturally to throw suspicion and doubt over the great principle laid down in the text. We must, then, bear in mind the fact which I have just suggested.

Much, perhaps the most of what we really enjoy, and some portion at least of what we suffer, evidently comes not from our merit or demerit, but solely from the will of God. They come from the united dictates of His wisdom and goodness. He sees that they are needed by us, that they are essential to our training and discipline, and therefore He sends them to us.

A moment's careful thought will serve to evince this. God, in giving, does not confine Himself to what we simply deserve. So far from it, indeed, there are some of His richest blessings which we receive before it is possible for us to have merited anything. Our glorious being, without which no other good could exist for us; our constitution, physical, mental, and spiritual; all our capacities for high attainments; our powers and faculties which link us to God and to the angels,—all these are the free gifts of His love and bounty. And the world which we live in, so wisely arranged, and so beautifully adapted to our complex nature—together with the numerous agents which He has formed to minister to our enjoyment here—these were all designed for us, long before we had an existence. After we enter upon our world-life, also, we should remember that quite a length of time elapses before we are responsible beings, and before we could be properly thought to merit either reward or punishment at the hand of God.

During the entire period of infancy and early youth, before reason and conscience are developed and accountability begins, everything that we receive—all that we enjoy, and all that we suffer—must be wholly irrespective of our deserts, whether good or bad. Many blessings, also, come to us daily through the whole course of our lives, not because we deserve them, but because we need them, and because the Lord is good, and delights to bestow them upon us.

Christ was careful to recognize this fact, and urged it upon his followers in proof of the Divine benevolence. What other evidence have we that God is kind to us? If His bounties were always measured

by our merits, then we may have proofs of His equity, but none whatever of His love. It is simple justice which pays us for what we may do. And on what grounds, in this case, could He base His claims to our love and gratitude? No duty is more frequently pressed upon our notice than that of thankfulness; and there would be no reason for this, were it not for the free, rich, and unmerited favors which He bestows upon all alike. "He maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and upon the good, and sendeth His rain upon the just and upon the unjust." These are gifts, free gifts of His love to us; and the same may be said of ten thousand other similar blessings, which are scattered all along the daily pathway of every man.

This is equally true of a large class of our sorrows. Many of them spring from circumstances over which the sufferer has no possible control. They are not strictly merited by us, for they often commence at a period prior to the time when we can properly be said to merit anything; and cannot therefore be regarded, in any just sense of the term, as a retribution. Such are the constitutional and other defects which we inherit from our parents; the hereditary tendencies to disease, both of body and of mind; the pains of infancy, and all the sufferings which precede the period of responsibility; together with very much of what we are compelled to endure in after life, through the sickness and death of dear friends, or through the wicked agency of bad people around us.

All these are evidently providential. They come, not because we deserve them, but solely from the will of God. They are, as we trust, but other modes of dispensing kindness. He sees that they are good for

us. In some way, mysterious to us, perhaps, they are ministering to our ultimate benefit. Our spiritual culture and discipline demand them. And although it may be exceedingly difficult for us to appreciate this always, still the pleasant fact is indisputable. Such evidently was Paul's conviction, for he tells us that "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory."

Now if we discriminate carefully in this matter—if we separate from human experience everything which is of this character—if we set aside that entire portion of our joys and sorrows which are clearly providential, which cannot be regarded as a reward or a punishment,—it will be seen that the remainder are distributed according to the strictest principles of equity, and that they correspond exactly to our merits, whether good or bad. Men get always precisely what they labor for,—not what they expect perhaps, but what their work necessarily yields. Their pay is just in kind and in proportion to what they may do. Work where they may, or how they will, the great principle of the text is strictly true of them: "They have their reward."

Illustrations of this fact may be drawn from a variety of sources. They may be found in the physical life of man. Distinguishing carefully, as I have suggested, what is reward from that which is simply gift, it will be found that every man enjoys just that amount of physical health and comfort which he earns, and no more. And so, on the other hand, the amount of physical evil which he suffers will be exactly pro

portioned to what he deserves. I say that this will be the case, if we properly make the distinction which I have noticed. Thus, as I have before intimated, there are differences in our physical condition, from our very childhood, which are the result of causes and influences lying wholly beyond our personal control. All the peculiarities of our normal constitution, our hereditary taints and tendencies, are of this character; and there are also many hidden subtile influences which may affect, favorably or unfavorably, our physical welfare,—which we had no hand in instituting, and cannot possibly avoid. But beyond everything of this kind, we get, in the way of physical joy or pain, just what we work for. If we earn health and strength, we shall get them; and if we earn disease and pain, we shall be sure to get these.

In this respect, the laws of our nature are inexorable. No one can obey or disobey them, and still avoid the legitimate consequences. If we always regard them as we ought, in eating, drinking, sleeping, air, dress, and exercise, we shall gain exactly that amount of physical enjoyment which our obedience may deserve. And if we live in the violation of these laws, eating food improperly, either in kind or in quantity; or drink intoxicating or other unhealthy liquors; or dress unsuitably to the wants of the season; or deprive ourselves of appropriate time for rest; or shut ourselves up to some sedentary employment, breathing an impure atmosphere a great portion of the time; or neglect exercise in the open air; or in any other manner disregard the demands of our physical welfare, we shall reap the wretched fruits of our doings in pain, just as surely as there is

truth in the Bible, or reality in the facts of human experience.

The same principle applies to our mental interests, and is exemplified therein in a similar manner. In mind, as in physical peculiarities, there are doubtless diversities of gifts. Some have, by nature, superior intellectual endowments, and some are placed under circumstances far more favorable to their culture than others enjoy. But, beyond all considerations of this kind, the matter is placed in our own hands. If we work for mental growth and power, we shall obtain them. And the measure of our improvement will be precisely the measure of our deserts. It is as true of wisdom as of anything else, that he that seeks shall find it, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. It will not come to us by intuition. Very little of it can be obtained without effort. We can look for it and expect it, only as the result of diligent training. And he who is mentally idle, or indolent, will just as surely find ignorance and mental imbecility attending it, as he will find physical weakness following the want of muscular exercise. The laws of mind, in these respects, are very similar to those of the body. They are equal in the demands which they make upon us, and are equally inevitable in the result. Mental labor is always paid for, both in kind and in degree. He who busies his thoughts for the most part with vain and frivolous things, must expect to find his reward in these; while he who seeks for truth and wisdom, will realize a far higher and nobler compensation.

The same great law runs through our moral being, and will find its proofs and illustrations there also.

Among the good gifts which we receive from the hand of God, the highest and the best are our moral powers and faculties; and just according to the use which we may make of these, will be our reward or our retribution.

If a man is just, and true, and kind, and compassionate, and loving, and forgiving—or just so far as he may cherish and practice these virtues—so far he will have added to all his other enjoyments, the sweet peace and serene comfort which necessarily flow from their exercise. And he does not have to wait long for these, either. They will come to him, not only surely, but they will come also speedily.

On the other hand, he who lives a life of wrong; who is mean, and selfish, and sensual, and malignant, and revengeful—or to just the extent that he may practice these vices—will inevitably have to bear the curses which these always bring home to their possessor. Nor can he hope to escape his retribution for any great length of time. He may apparently evade it for a little season. He may not seem to suffer much more than other and better men. And still, if he carries the spirit of these vices within him, he must experience also their legitimate fruits in the end. If he works for the Devil, he must take such pay as his master gives him, and he may look for it about as soon as it falls due. The old notion, that Satan never thinks of rewarding his faithful servants until some distant pay-day beyond the grave, is only a fatal mistake after all. What we earn of him, we shall get of him; and it will always be in his own coin, and somewhat promptly rendered.

Finally: The same principle will find its illustra-

tions in our religious life. Aside from what God gives to us, both in natural endowments and in the riches of His truth and grace, we have, religiously, just what belongs to us, and nothing more. If we seek, first of all, His kingdom, and His righteousness; if our spiritual interests are paramount in our thoughts and affections; then the rewards which necessarily attend these will be equally great and certain. I speak it reverently: God and Christ are sure and speedy paymasters. No one who works for them will fail to receive the full amount of his wages, and these will be given as soon as they are due. Every tear of true penitence; every sigh of heart-felt contrition; every struggle with temptation; every patient endurance of trial; every energy put forth for a higher and better state; none of these can fail of their speedy and certain reward. They are sources of the soul's true joy. They constitute its best riches —its treasures laid up in heaven.

Let us learn to regard it, then, as a solemn reality, that whatever we have will depend very much upon what we seek for. If we are looking and laboring for the things of this world only, then we must expect to take the things of this world in payment. We cannot have spiritual blessings while every energy of the soul is absorbed in devotion to something else. We cannot work for one thing and expect to get something else, and entirely different. If we are striving for wealth and honors, and the world's applause, then we must naturally expect that our only reward will be found in these things. Grapes do not grow on thorns, nor figs on thistles. Each produces its own kind. And so it is with regard to

everything which belongs to human life and activity. He who sows to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, and he who sows to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.

Thus it is through all the departments of human experience. The great law of compensation holds good everywhere. Physically, mentally, morally, and religiously, it operates with the same infinite precision, meting out to all men their just dues, as they stand in the account-books of the presiding Sovereign.

Here, then, we may know what to rely upon always. No one needs to be mistaken about it for a moment. The divergent paths of life and death are ever open before us, and may God in His mercy enable us to choose wisely between them.

LET US PRAY.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father: We recognize in Thee the mysterious Source of our existence, and the Giver of all our joys. We bless Thee for the tokens of Thy love: We praise Thee for the bounties of Thy providence: We give Thee hearty thanks for the riches of Thy grace.

Continue Thy favors unto us, O Lord, according to Thy perception of our necessities. If we need temporal gifts, grant them in Thy mercy. If we are wanting in spiritual blessings, bestow them upon us abundantly. Help us to live as Christ lived; to walk as he walked; and in his spirit to discharge our duties faithfully, and to overcome the world. In our weakness, strengthen us: In our folly, grant us wisdom: In our sorrows give us comfort, and finally crown us with life and immortality, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

RELIGIOUS TRAINING.

BY REV. H. R. NYE. SCRIPTURE LESSON, ISAIAH XL.

——But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. EPHESIANS vi. 4.

ALMOST every Church has now its Sunday School; and in this fact we might seem to find a general recognition of the duty which is urged in the text.

But is it the common belief that we are really bound to educate our children as disciples of Christ? Mohammedan children are brought up in the Mohammedan Faith: Jewish children are brought up in the Jewish Faith. The children of Mohammedan and Jewish parents are not left to themselves, to guess out, or *develop* their own religion, when they have arrived at rational years; but from the outset they are regarded and trained as Mohammedans and Jews. And I commence my discourse by inquiring whether *we* who live in Christian lands, and who accept the Christian Faith, recognize the same idea or law.

Something much like this was once recognized in the Christian Church. In earlier ages, children were received as members of the Christian Fold, and the parents, upon *their* part, declared it to be their purpose to bring up these children within the Church;—in the faith and obedience of Christ.

In those periods, there was a distinction made between children born of Christian parents, and such as

had been born among Pagans or Jews. Those who had grown up *without the fold*, must first be converted, and then adopted into the Christian Family. But the offspring of Christian parents were regarded as already within the fold, infant and youthful disciples of Christ,—and therefore not needing *conversion*, in that sense.

Such was once the general belief and order of the Christian Church. Is it so *now ?*

PLATFORM is a common and popular word in this, our day. Political parties and men, it is said, stand upon certain platforms,—that is, they maintain certain political theories or ideas. Adopting this mode of speech, we may say that Churches and Sects stand upon certain Platforms, professing certain religious ideas or beliefs. In this sense, we have a Catholic platform, and a Protestant — a Trinitarian platform, and a Unitarian — a Calvinistic platform, and an Arminian; and others which we need not here mention.

The religious practices of men are supposed not only to rest upon, but to flow out of, their different platforms or beliefs; and we may say that opinions, or ideas, rule the world.

There are Churches built upon a Calvinistic basis, or belief. These Churches hold a peculiar view of human nature, and of the moral state in which men enter upon this earthly life. They affirm the natural, in-born depravity of mankind. All men are born in sin, and all men must be *re*-born before they can become disciples of Christ. This is the corner-stone upon which their theological superstructure is reared.

Now, as concerning their piety we do not speak.

They may surpass all other people in the virtues and charities of the Christian life, and may labor with greater diligence than any of us who profess a different faith, to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," but they cannot be expected to look upon religious *education* as the first great duty or law. Their theory of natural depravity forbids this. It un-churches all children. It looks upon them, not as natural branches, partaking of the root and fatness of the tree, but as wild olives, *not yet graffed in;* and certainly the idea of growth, or cultivation, can have no legitimate place in any such theory as this. No training, or pruning, or transplanting, can change the nature of a plant or a child. And therefore, naturally and consistently, CONVERSION becomes the first word and the prominent idea in this Calvinistic system of belief. The wild olive must be graffed in; and then, and not before, there can be growth, and blossoms, and fruit.

And hence it will be found that these churches and people are seeking *the conversion of their own children*, as the means of rescuing these hostile and wicked ones out of the kingdom of evil in which they were born, and carrying them over into the Kingdom of Christ, to which no man belongs by nature. They do not expect their children to grow up, from the outset, as religious beings, Christian children—to accept and welcome what a youthful mind can comprehend of the teachings and spirit of Christ—to think Christian thoughts, to cherish Christian affections, and lead Christian lives. Nay, *their nature must first be changed.* It is not culture, not instruction, not training, which their children require, but *conver-*

sion. This is their central thought, and you can readily see how it modifies and colors every other.

But there are other Churches, which occupy a *broader* platform, it is said,—a different platform, at least. There are Churches (including our own) which reject this dogma of original and transmitted sin. Sin, in our view, is a voluntary and personal act. Adam's transgression has not *made* us sinners. He bore his own sin, and *we* must bear ours. Depravity, we say, is acquired by our own voluntary and repeated sins. Our conduct may influence, but does not decide the character and conduct of those whom God has committed to our care. Children enter upon life with different temperaments, different tendencies and gifts, but they come into the world as sinless as the angels that stand before the throne. Over the couch of every new-born child, we can repeat those words of Christ, so precious, so full of hope when we think of the children whom the Lord has taken away, "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

This is our Platform; and our practice ought to harmonize with it. By *our* affirmation, our children are born in the Kingdom of Christ. This kingdom is their native soil, and they ought to breathe its airs, and live upon its productions, and grow up in obedience to its laws.

But are they expected to remain upon that soil, to feed upon Christ's bread of truth, to drink Christ's spirit of love, to be fed and trained within the Fold of Christ, even "as birds are fed and sheltered within the nest, and so got ready for the upward flight?"

I believe we must answer this inquiry, Nay. It is

not, I judge, the general conviction, the common belief among us, that our children are to be trained for Christian lives, to grow up as learners, pupils, disciples, in the School of Christ. We fondly hope (sometimes against hope) that their habits will be good, and that wholesome moral principles will by-and-bye gain dominion over their hearts and lives. Beyond this we seldom go, and beyond this our purposes, it is feared, seldom extend. We are not as men clearly recognizing a duty which rests upon us, but in doubt how that duty shall be performed: We do not seem to regard ourselves as *under obligations* to train up children in the faith and practice of Christ.

By our cheerful support of Christian institutions, and in other ways, we confess our belief in Christ as the Sent of God, and in Christianity as a Religion which God has given for the guidance and salvation of men: But we do not take our children, and seek to instil into their minds and hearts the truths, and precepts, and hopes, of the Christian Faith; nor do we strive with patience and diligence to draw out and train their spiritual powers. Certainly we do not work in this direction as when we would cultivate their mental faculties, or as when we would teach them to sing, or dance, or play. We do not approach them, saying in either words or spirit, "You are Christian children—not only born under a Christian roof and living in a Christian land, but born also in the Kingdom of Christ. The Scriptures are yours: the Church is yours: Christ is yours, and you are Christ's; and we desire you now, in the commencement of your life-journey, as in your maturer years,

and ever, *to think, and feel, and act*, as pupils and disciples of Christ."

There would be nothing fanatical in that, I trust—and nothing humiliating; but we are far enough from any such fanaticism as that, just now; and the humiliation is in the fact, that there would seem to be a new plank foisted into the *Platform* on which we stand. It is the non-intervention plank; the child-sovereignty plank!

Every child, now-a-days, seems to be in some sort a sovereign. Children must not be expected to submit to parental interference or direction; and especially in religion, every child must be left to think, decide and act for himself. Practically, the doctrine is, that our children must *be let alone*, to serve God or Baal, to lead religious or irreligious lives; to become Roman Catholics or Protestants, Mohammedans or Jews, Christians or Infidels, just as they shall decide for themselves! They must try the world first, (though a boy might as well be sent to sea alone, without experience, or without a chart;) taste the pleasures of the world *first*; "sow their wild-oats" *first;* and then—when they have tasted pleasure's cup, and drank it to the dregs—when they are able to tell a sad and bitter tale concerning their doubts, and struggles, and unbeliefs—and when the noblest part of life is gone,—then, we trust, they will quit their folly, and *begin* to love the God in whom they live, and to serve that Christ who, as a Teacher sent from God, demands the unreserved homage both of heart and life!

This, we fear, is about the mournful truth; and all around us there are parents who, in regard to all mat-

ters of Religion, are *letting their children alone;*—permitting time and circumstances to do what they may, (whether for good or ill,) and still hoping that their children, at last, will "come to Christ," and *die*, if they have never lived, in the faith and spirit of the Gospel!

Seldom do we put this doctrine into words, and very likely we shrink from it, when it is stated in this plain and unadorned style. But this *let-alone policy* is an utter abandonment of the Christian idea, or plan; and it is high time that we should look at it thoroughly, and consider our ways.

Does any one, at this point, inquire what we are to do? and what new methods are proposed?

My first answer is, We must conform our practice to our faith, and be consistent with ourselves. We are Christians; and as such, we are to educate our children in the religion of Christ. We discard the notion that religion is for sick-days, or evil-days, or dying-days, and we affirm that it is for *all* days,—for childhood as well as age,—and that it covers every relation, and interest, and duty of life. We declare that the children God has given us, are *born* morally upright and pure, and that they can *grow up* Christian men and women. We deny that they start with a sinful nature, needing conversion at the outset; and we affirm that they are naturally capable of receiving religion, and that the Gospel is the agency God Himself has chosen for their spiritual training.

Our *theory must be reduced to practice.* The soil is good: the seed is provided: why do we fold our arms in sleep, and allow the enemy to sow tares? It is consistent, we think, when a Calvinist says to a child,

"You are evil, born in iniquity and sin. You have a very wicked heart, and until *that* is entirely changed, (and you cannot change it yourself,) you cannot take the first step toward a Christian life!" And it would be consistent, in a child so taught, to *wait*, and look forward to the expected revelation, or change. How many indeed educated in that view, have waited, and are still waiting, for some angel to come down and cast them into the pool, expecting in a single moment to be made every whit clean and whole!

But *we* cannot approach or treat our children in that way; and the inquiry returns, What method shall we adopt? My present answer will not regard details, nor even outlines, but I shall endeavor to develope the law or principle upon which we are to proceed.

In the first place, we are to recognize the Christian Faith as true, and therefore, without any concealment or hesitancy, we are to educate our children in the religion taught by Jesus Christ. In an open and positive manner, we must strive to bring up our children as Christians — just as Jewish children are brought up as Jews, and Mohammedan children as Mohammedans. This must be our determinate and glowing purpose, God working *in* us, and by us, and in and by our offspring—to train them up in the doctrine and duties of the Christian Faith.

In the second place, we must cultivate their religious affections and powers. Every bodily power is developed by use. The intellect, without external instruction and aid, will remain dormant within us. The same is true of our religious capacities, or nature. They are made for action and growth, but they will

not start up and develop themselves. As you culti vate a child's mental powers, that he may think, and reason, and remember; as you awaken his powers of imagination, or call forth his musical gifts, and teach him to play or sing,—so you must call into exercise the spiritual capacities that God has implanted within him. Without education, the spiritual part of his nature will remain inactive, and as useless as a treasure hidden in a field. The foundations of religion are in the nature which God has bestowed upon us: but this nature must be cultivated—these powers must be called into vital action. We do not propose to *change* human nature, but to train it, enlighten it, elevate it; and this training must begin in infancy and youth. Children have reverence—some of them have naturally more than others, but the faculty is universal; and if this faculty be cultivated, they will be deferential to parents, to teachers, to wise and aged people, and they will reverence and worship God. Children have a moral sense—they can distinguish between right and wrong; and if this power is quickened and obeyed, it will speak with authority, and sway the conduct and the life. Children are hopeful. They are looking forward; and however sunny their path may be, they anticipate still brighter and better days. And if this power be drawn out, and if they are instructed in the truths of Christ, their hopes will not be confined to material things, nor to this present life, but their affections will be placed upon treasures which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and they will live and die in the expectation of a glorious immortality.

You have all read or heard of Laura Bridgman, the

deaf, dumb and blind girl. It was by disease she fell into that condition, when only two years of age. But, under the care of a wise and humane teacher, she learned to read and write, to sew and knit.

In *her* case you observe what *culture* can do. There may be children who appear to us as if but one moral sense were left — who are passionate, selfish and wicked, and of whose improvement there would seem to be no ground of hope; but any child *who can perceive a difference between right and wrong*, can be improved and trained up as a Christian child. All soils are not equally good, but there *is* good ground, *some* good ground, in every child's heart; and before tares or weeds can spring up—before evil *habits* are formed, or evil *affections* are fully developed—that good ground should be sown with precious seed. There must also be training, as well as seed-sowing. There must be pruning in this field of Christian endeavor. Weeds will take care of themselves, but a crop of wheat cannot be raised without your interference or work. Think how a man who has lost his arms, can learn to write with his feet. Think how the blind can learn to read and accomplish ingenious work. Think how much time must be devoted to elementary branches in the Common Schools—how many figures must be made and blotted out, before your child can add with facility, or subtract, or multiply; and without *this*, he cannot advance to the higher branches of mathematics. Think how many hours and days must be devoted to study and practice, before your child can become a skilful player on any instrument of music.

Consider all this, and do not expect that you can

draw out the religious faculties of your child's nature, and train that child in the religious life, without labor, and study, and patience, and persistent effort.

Yet remember, that every faculty which God has given, was given for development and use; and strive, with all your ability, for the religious *culture* of your child.

Passing beyond training into teaching, we may inquire, in the third place, and finally, *What* are we to teach our children? We cannot easily *mystify* this matter. There can really be but one answer to the question. What are we ourselves? What do we ourselves believe? We are not Moslems, and nobody will expect us to teach the Moslem faith. We are not Jews, and nobody will expect us to teach the Jewish faith. We are *Christians;* and none can doubt that we are therefore to teach the Religion of Christ.

Let me say, moreover, that while I abhor many dogmas which many sects consider Christian, I honor the *consistency* of every man who teaches to his children what he religiously believes to be true; and I know of nothing which so highly commends itself to our regard, in the education of our offspring, as the *Religion and the Morality of Christian Universalism.*

It is not my purpose to pursue the thought, in the way of argument. The all-comprehensive doctrine to which I allude, is the revelation of the God of Love, through the Redeemer of the world; and all of us who really believe what we profess, and feel its power, will strive, with a fixed and earnest purpose, to "bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the LORD."

*LET US PRAY.

OUR FATHER who art in Heaven, who hast blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Thine anointed Son: We give Thee hearty thanks for having called us out of darkness into marvellous light, and humbly pray that our souls may so feel the touch of Thy spirit, as ever to honor Thy redeeming word.

Especially may we be moved to turn the thoughts of our children to the day-spring from on high, that so their feet may be guided into the way of peace, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

PATIENT WAITING.

BY REV. H. C. LEONARD. SCRIPTURE LESSON, HEBREWS I AND II.

Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?—JOHN xi. 36.

JESUS wept at the tomb of Lazarus. It was this circumstance which attracted the attention of the Jews, or in view of which they uttered the words of the text. Some of them seeing the depth of his grief, and supposing that he wept because his friend had died, said: "Behold how he loved him!" Others said, remembering that he had wrought great cures with superhuman power: "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

I would have you notice that neither of these two classes of the Jews, comprehended the Saviour's spirit: that they both were in the dark as to his feelings and his aim.

One party, judging him by themselves, regarded him as borne down with sorrow, because the hand of death had taken away from his sight the form of a friend. They did not know that such selfish grief could not lie as a burden upon his soul, that he could see through all veils and behold the spiritual forms of all worlds, and therefore could have no doubt as to the situation or condition of his friend; the one who

had passed from merely human vision. It did not occur to them that his tears were shed for the sorrowing ones around him: that this manifestation of such deep and tender sensibility, of such love and affection, was occasioned by the anguish of those sisters of the departed who had besought him to come to their abode.

The other party, while agreeing with their neighbors as to the cause of his sorrow, ventured to ask why one who had given sight to the blind, had not withheld his friend from the grasp of death. Their question was an intimation, that it perhaps was not his power that opened the eyes of the blind. "Had it been," they hinted, "this man, whom he loved, this brother of Martha and Mary, who are known to be among his most intimate friends, would not have died."

This is the way in which short-sighted men have reasoned in all periods. It is the way in which they reason in our own day.

The Saviour was not sad because Lazarus had been taken away from this lower world; he did not stand in need of consolation on account of the death of his friend. He was aware of the moral state, and he could look into the spiritual habitation of the departed. Besides: he knew that he had the power to call him back to his sorrowing sisters. His grief was not selfish: it was disinterested, as a thing personal to himself. He was touched with sorrow, he was affected to tears, because there were sorrowing ones near him, who were groping in the darkness of ignorance, and who needed the aid and guidance of his enlightening word. He grieved for those who had

no hope, who did not understand the ministry of death, who had not yet learned that the good Father reigns in all worlds, and that He leads His children through trial and affliction, through suffering and death, through change after change, to a destiny of holiness and peace. And in this feeling of sympathy and compassion for others, he called back the spirit of Lazarus to its tenement of clay, and restored him to his weeping kindred.

Those who witnessed this miracle, imagined, no doubt, that the Saviour by it had attained an end for himself. But the end was not what they supposed. It was not the restored companionship of his friend: he had this while the insensible form lay in the tomb. He who, with a spiritual eye, could see the angels that came in the hour of trial or weariness to minister to him, never lost sight of those who were nearest to his heart: he enjoyed, in all times and in all places, their society and their love. The end which he attained was this: The conviction of his great lesson of immortality in the minds of the bereaved. He proved by the miracle which he wrought, that the soul of Lazarus had not died, that his spirit was still alive and in the care of God; and so, thenceforth, the mourners lived in Christian faith and hope.

Moreover, the cavillers were taught that, though the Saviour did not in a selfish spirit prevent the death of a friend, he afterwards, in love and pity for others, performed a nobler, a diviner work: He established a truth that could be proved but by bringing the dead to life.

How often does the High and Holy One, through

innumerable ministries and agencies, silence doubt and expose the folly of unbelief! The world lies before us like a broad map, and Skepticism looks upon its numerous wrecks and failures, and upon the crowds of men and women who weep and mourn over them; and by our side it sees the Saviour in the midst of these children of sorrow, weeping and mourning too. And Doubt exclaims, Behold how he loved the departed! Lo! *his* hopes are crushed; *his* expectations are not fulfilled. And Unbelief cries out, Could not this Mighty One, who did such wonderful works, have prevented these calamities and these disasters? Why did he not cause that those sad events should not have taken place?

At length, God, through the power which He has placed in the mind of his Son, and which, derived from Him, is active in the souls of all His faithful disciples, and in all the instrumentalities of His spiritual kingdom, brings order out of confusion, harmony out of discord, and turns all the mistakes and all the misdemeanors of His children to a noble account. Then Doubt takes the form of Faith, and Skepticism is no longer vain; and both are compelled to say: Lo! God is wise, and good, and just. His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts; but as the heavens are higher than the earth, so His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts. He maketh all things work together for good. Let us henceforth trust the wisdom and the justice which He reveals to us in His discipline, the love and the mercy which He unfolds to us in the afflictions of life, the goodness and the benevolence which He manifests in numberless

ways, to promote the improvement and the happiness of His offspring.

Men of contracted vision cannot trust the benevolent power of God; cannot wait with patience for God's time of perfection. Believing in their own wisdom, they judge that if there is a God who seeks the good of His creatures, He would not suffer any of them to become wicked, or to fall into danger: He would have long ago lifted them into light and joy. They say within themselves: Could not He who brought mankind into life, before now have made the world perfect? If we are ruled by a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, why does He not instantly put an end to wrong? Why must His children struggle and suffer for ages and ages, before the day of salvation comes? Thus they set their own thoughts above those of the Almighty, and live on, through all their days, in infidelity and discontent. Thus, in their faithlessness, they spend their lives in misery and sorrow.

It is not so with those who, with the eye of faith, see that the influences of the heavenly world are perpetually fulfilling the purposes of the Holy One, and that the end of justice and love will be attained in God's own way, and in God's own time. They bow with reverence to the word of God. They work with hope and confidence for every righteous cause. In the darkest hour, they still work on. In the time of peril or disaster, they still are patient and cheerful. They believe no good effort is made in vain. They believe that every promise of God will be fulfilled; that though for the present the endeavors of love and justice are opposed, the wishes and the prayers of the

wise and the good are not answered, they yet will be successful in a future day. They behold the Son of God standing at the grave of every buried hope, at the tomb of every lost treasure, not only weeping in pity for the sorrowful and the down-cast, but in the attitude to say: Come forth, all ye hidden kindred, come forth all the interests precious to my Father's heart, and let the unbelieving see that the power of God is not limited by the lines of the earth, or by the influence of error and sin. Come forth! in forms of nobleness and beauty, and prove that God is not asleep in the hour when iniquity seems triumphant, nor powerless beyond the vail of the world,—that in all seasons, and in all realms, He is working out His benevolent plans.

Those who are engaged in unholy callings, and those who are wasting their powers in the course of sin, flatter themselves with the idea that because they are not suddenly or miraculously arrested in their iniquitous career,—that, because God does not stop them at once by some arbitrary power, and lead them to work in new vocations, and to throw off their old habits, and to put on nobler and diviner ones, there is no God, or, if there is, His eyes are closed, and they can go on in their wickedness with impunity. They do not consider, that, little by little, their strength is wasting away,—that for every evil thought, and every idle word, and every sinful act, they are daily, hourly, perpetually paying a penalty,—that they are already, in their character and condition, what they should have feared to be,—that they are already what they have been fitting themselves to be —that in all periods, and in all places, their life will

be just what they make it, and that they are not now suddenly led into the path of virtue, because God sees that they have not yet learned that the way of transgression is hard, because He discerns that they must feel the burdens of sin longer and more deeply, before they will be disposed to hear and to obey His voice.

But all these things are true. God takes His own time to bring the sinful to a sense of their condition, His own time to arrest them in their evil path, and to lead them from it into the better one of righteousness and peace; and this time is, when they come to see themselves as they are,—when they grow weary and faint with the famine of sin within the heart,—when they feel they can no longer bear the load they carry upon their souls, and they say: "I will arise and go to my Father, whose grace is sufficient for me, and confess my sins, and enter into the joys to which He calls all the weary and all the heavy laden."

The sick, who lie day after day upon their beds, praying to be released from pain, but praying in vain, wonder when their pains will cease, or why he who bore all our sorrows, does not make haste in his mission of mercy to give them relief. They do not remember that they must learn the lesson of patience and resignation, before they can hear his soothing voice saying unto them, "Arise and walk, for thou art made whole," or that, if they truly learn this lesson, they will have repose, though they approach every day nearer and nearer the grave.

The bereaved who, like Rachel weeping for her children because they are not, pour out their lamentations in continuous strains, refusing to be comforted,

have forgotten that the Lord has taken from them the friends so dear to their hearts. Let them be calm; let them listen to His word; let them wipe the tears from their eyes, and they will see the Saviour near the sepulchre, proclaiming the resurrection and the life of the departed.

Let them not say in murmuring accents, "If thou hadst been here, they would not have died;" nor in skeptical complaint, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind have caused that they should not have been taken away:" But let them have faith in the Saviour's love, and let them wait with hopeful, confident hearts, to hear him declare that the dead are not lost, but gone before; that, as the fallen tree shall sprout again, so the spirits of the departed shall grow and thrive in the purer air of immortality.

* LET US PRAY.

BLESSED and only Potentate, in whom alone is the fountain of life: Though we mourn, in our darkness, that we understand so little of Thy ways, yet do our souls rejoice that we may put our entire trust in Thy wisdom and Thy love. Thou leadest the blind in the wilderness: Thou feedest the famishing in the desert: Thou renewest the strength of the weary; and all the appointments of Thy providence find their consummation in the kingdom of eternal rest.

We thank and bless Thee for all the elements of patient waiting, and for all the consolations of religious endeavor. And humbly we pray that memories of Thy goodness, and prophecies of Thy mercy, may evermore lead us into the celebration of Thy praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

RESURRECTION NOT INCREDIBLE.

BY REV. G. W. MONTGOMERY. SCRIPTURE LESSON, ROMANS VIII.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? Acts xxxvi. 8.

The idea that death, from which man shrinks, will be succeeded by life, to which human hope and aspiration cling, is not only of great moment, but is indissolubly linked to the vital interests and the best affections of humanity. It is closely woven into social happiness, and is the only power that can satisfy some of the most imperative wants of the soul. It unfolds its importance when the certain brevity of life utters its warnings, and is invested with irresistible attraction and a glowing beauty and blessing, when our tears fall on the dead forms of dearly-loved ones. Without it, the sky is dark and the future enveloped in impenetrable gloom:—with it, the heavens become radiant with divine light; the mists clear away from the future, and give place to a definite faith, whose guides point ever to an immortal home—the home of all who have died, and of all who are yet to die and be born with a spiritual body into "the image of the heavenly."

The possession of this faith, and an unwavering confidence in its truth, give the soul new power and vigor to travel over the rugged path of misfortune without faltering. Life has new charms, and is more

precious and dignified. For the thought enlivens every hour of the passing years, that existence is not a mere incident, an accidental thing, to endure only as a transient meteor, but is an indissoluble link in an endless chain of being, and is a reality to which God has given birth, only to endow it with the capacity of infinite progression, without subjection to decay or death.

In the presence of such facts as these, is it not a curious conclusion, which a few persons adopt, that faith in the resurrection is a dream, a fiction of desire, a wild hope with no substance and no foundation?—that this faith, which has been felt in all ages and among all peoples, and the craving for whose accomplishment appears in all systems of doctrine, whether Christian or Pagan, in the crudest as well as the most refined,—thereby showing that the soul has ever experienced a common want, which can find its supply only in the belief of a future existence: That this faith, which has woven itself into the affections of myriads of persons, and into the joys and comforts of millions of homes, and has been the cause of countless instances of sublime heroism in enduring misfortune, agony, and death: That this faith, thus intimately connected with the dearest hopes and the best interests of life, is a mere superstition and unworthy of belief?

This conclusion is the more curious and unsatisfactory, from the fact that it ignores the old and truthful argument, "a good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." In its logic, this tree of faith in the resurrection to immortal life, is corrupt and from bad seed, though it is ever blossoming with the brightest hopes, and is

ever bearing fruit that nourishes the soul into a noble trust in God, into a glorious confidence that life shall triumph over death, and into an affection, the deeper, and stronger, and more effectual for moral purity, because it reaches to the home of God, of the Saviour, and of the reunion of broken families.

On the other hand, the tree of unbelief is affirmed to be a good tree and of the right sort, though its fruit starves the soul into faith in annihilation, and blights the affections with despair, by teaching that death is an endless sleep, which brings families, mind, and life into absolute destruction.

Thus, in the creed of skepticism, the faith which is of great utility to every one who really receives it, is false; while the unbelief that encases every hope and aspiration of the soul in polar ice, is true and right, and worthy of all acceptation!

Notwithstanding the practical inconsistency of all such doubts, there are those who declare that the resurrection is an impossible event; that death and the decomposition of the body, involving the cessation of mind, render the continued existence of the individual incredible; and that therefore we do violence to reason and experience, in expecting that mortality will be succeeded by immortality.

Beneath this kind of objection, there is a disposition to doubt and deny that which cannot be seen. Because we cannot look upon the future life, as we look upon the present life and its termination in death;—because the soul cannot be dissected as the organs of the material body can be displayed by the knife of the anatomist,—a mistrust arises, which, in some minds, hardens into the denial that man possesses any power

which can exist beyond his present organization. Even some believers in the resurrection are partially affected by these views of the subject, and for the time being, falter in their confidence, losing sight of the important truth, that in regard to the reality of the future life, we "walk by faith and not by sight."

How soon would this unbelief and this wavering of faith vanish, if we would only plant our feet on the solid fact, that nature is full of organisms and results, far more strange and incredible than giving immortal life to mortal beings—some of which organisms and results are known, not by sight, but alone by the wonder-working agency of human reason. If we will listen attentively to the voices of these natural phenomena, they will teach us that the Christian doctrine of the resurrection is not incredible, but is like a rock that is stronger than the centuries that roll over it, and stands unmoved amid storm and flood. They will so confirm our confidence, that with wonder we shall inquire of unbelievers, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

The researches of Geologists have shown that there was a period in the earth's history, when the human race had not commenced its existence. They demonstrate, that at *that* period, it was as much impossible for human beings to live, as it would be now, were the surface of the earth suddenly and entirely covered with an enormous thickness of melted rock. Whoever examines the facts that establish this position, will be convinced, even without the voice of inspiration, that there was a time *when man was not*, and a

time when the first parents of our race commenced to live.

Now suppose that, immediately previous to this wondrous act of creation, an inhabitant of some other planet had visited the earth, and had been informed that God intended to mould dead clods into two living, moral, intellectual beings, and that their descendants would cover the earth, and as the noble fruits of their reason and skill, would fashion sciences, mechanics, and civilization, with all their marvellous truths, appliances, and sources of happiness: Would not such an announcement appear to him strange and fabulous? What object could his eyes rest upon, what fact could his mind grasp, to convince him of its possibility? Yet with all its apparent incredibility, man exists, and all the grand results of that existence are acknowledged realities in history and experience. Now, is not all this even more wonderful, more incredible, than that God should, in another world, continue the life to which He gave being on earth, and seal it with eternity?

Of all this, however, it may be said, that we know man exists, because personal consciousness and outward observation demonstrate it. But we have never seen a human soul; we have no experience of another existence; and as we only see men die and hopelessly decay, it is incredible that they should live again.

Yet why, it may well be inquired, why should want of vision and experience be supposed to establish the incredibility of the resurrection, since all around us there are many phenomena of nature, whose mechanism and action are sealed against human detection?

Some of the most gigantic operations of nature are

forever beyond sight, hearing, and experience, and, unlike any manifestations of power with which we are acquainted by the medium of the senses, are noiseless in their sublime work. We hear the rattle and clamor of the machinery created by human hands. The volcanic mountain shakes and heaves and groans in its awful exhibitions of strength. The ocean sounds deep notes in the shrill shrieking of the storm that stirs its vast heart. But the greatest movements in the universe have no such results. They are calm and silent. Look out from the earth into the heavens, and do you hear, or see, or feel, aught of that power of gravitation whose existence both science and reason are compelled to admit and to admire? Yet out there, unseen, unheard, with no clanking of chains, no creaking of wheels, this giant power places its finger upon the earth, and drives it around the sun at the rate of more than a thousand miles every minute. It sends its lines to every satellite and planet, controls their places and motions, and drives all these, with the sun as their common center, around a more distant sun, with inconceivable velocity and with a length of year, compared with whose duration the six thousand years of human life form but a few seconds of its grand time-movement, and are marked off by a beat or two of its great pendulum. And though these vast labors are perpetually active, yet we are personally insensible of them, while no human eye can scan them, no human hand grasp them.

Yet, in the presence of such wondrous revelations as these, some persons dream, and say, that it is incredible that God should raise the dead, because they have never seen *a soul* as it escapes from the body at

its dissolution, and because they have not been permitted to witness the processes of the resurrection! Surely it is strange that such doubting should exist. Should not the idea of incredibility, when connected with the doctrine of immortal life, vanish out of sight, as we listen to the voices of nature and gaze upon the glorious phenomena which God has wrought in the universe of matter and mind? If these are realities, why should the resurrection be thought incredible, or faith in it be deemed a superstition?

In the masterly treatise upon the future life and the condition of its subjects, which is found in Paul's letter to the Corinthian Church, the apostle dwells upon this phase of skepticism, and checks it by displaying unanswerable facts from nature. Observe the process of his reasoning:—"All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." 1 Cor. xv. 39–42.

The clear argument is this: If God has created different orders of glory among the stars, why could He not have different orders of glory in His intelligent creation, by causing the earthly glory of the mortal life to be succeeded by the imperishable glory of a heavenly life? If He has given to every living thing its own peculiar body, fitted to its wants and circumstances, and thus established in nature a vast variety

in organization and appearance, why should He not give to the soul a new and a "spiritual body," organized in harmony with the relations of the immortal life? Is the infinite Creator so limited in His resources, that He can create living bodies only on earth? Can He not add another order of life to the catalogue which this world furnishes? While nature is teeming with wonderful and varied forms of living organisms, is it impossible for the Almighty to raise the intelligent existence that now is, into the immediate home of His own Being, and thus transform the earthly into the angelic?

Strange it may seem, yet the apostle shows, by the analogy of the seed, that it is no more strange than the existence of certain phenomena in the natural world. The seed has its own peculiar body. Placed under favorable circumstances, that body disorganizes, and the germ it concealed springs up into new life. Who of us can tell how all the elements of the future plant are garnered up in that seed? What eye can look into it, and see the beatings of its tiny heart, and trace the nice processes of the growth of the new form, as it shoots its stalk upwards, throws out its green leaves, unfolds its beautiful flowers, and matures its nutritious fruit? All this is a mystery to us. We cannot attain to the knowledge of it. One fact, however, we plainly see. The body with which God clothes the plant, is very different from *that* with which He clothes the seed. And yet the one springs from the other. Now this natural process is as strange, as that the soul should be liberated by the dissolution of the body, and in a new form should grow up into an endless life, and blossom into

holiness and love. The one is no more incredible than the other.

Indeed, when we look truly at the works of God's providence, a *denial* of or a faltering *faith* in the resurrection, seems a weakness that should at once give place to the vigorous strength of confidence and trust. Think, for a moment, that God is limitless in power, infinite in wisdom, boundless in goodness, and that He is the Creator of the vast and wondrous universe which is guided and controlled by the fiat of His will. Reflect upon the overwhelming fact, that God has crowded the heavens with innumerable worlds, stretching far away beyond the vision of the most powerful telescope, into regions where no human eye hath ever seen, no human footstep hath ever trod: Reflect that these worlds are all in motion, forming a web of movement so seemingly confused, that we cannot disentangle it, and yet that satellites, planets, comets, and suns, are for ever singing the song of order and harmony to the praise of the Being to whom they owe their existence. Remember that God alone hung this earth in space, and guides it with inconceivable swiftness around the sun; that the awful throbbings of the ocean-heart beat to His power, while the land gives birth to the organic forms it sustains, only by His command; that with Him alone are the issues of life, and that His laws of providence and love hold all beings in their embrace, from man to the invisible animalculæ that sport their brief hour in the rays of a summer's sun. Group around you all these wonders, and as you ponder their majesty let the thought be in your mind that you have looked only on the title-page of the grand

universe, in whose wondrous volume the history of God's works is written; and then, with your souls full of the sublimity evolved from your reflections, listen to the question, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" What answer could you give, save to use the words of that Saviour who came to demonstrate the truth of the resurrection, "*With God all things are possible.*"

I can discover no reason why any person should look upon *the resurrection of the dead* as an incredible thing, since its accomplishment depends alone upon the will of God. To this position, then, add the fact that the knowledge of the reality of the future life, is just as necessary to satisfy a craving want in man's nature, as food is necessary to subdue the calls of animal hunger. The soul craves it as a stimulus to attain its highest development and the activity of its intensest affections. Amid the inevitable changes of life, its cares, its sorrows, its death-bereavements, suffering humanity as naturally seeks after this faith, as a plant feels for light to give it color and aid in its growth. Then connect with this truth the undeniable fact, that God has left no natural want unsatisfied, and therefore He would not leave this hunger of the soul unfed, while He possesses wisdom to plan the process of the resurrection, and the power and goodness to execute it, and you then have the foundation of an irresistible argument in favor of the resurrection of the dead. And as the strength and relations of that argument unfold themselves, they will strike their roots deeply into the cross of Christ, as the

glorious symbol of the sublime truth they sustain, and which they commend to the faith of the world.

Yes! Jesus, the Son of God, after a life whose spotless purity has shed an ineffable calm of holiness over the world, surrendered his existence only that he might break the bands of death, and place the seal of God on the truth of the doctrine of the resurrection, that man might have the assurance, not only of a future, immortal life, but also of a life unstained by sin, unmarred by error, unwet by tears of anguish, unvisited by death, where loved ones shall meet to part no more, and the God of love and goodness shall be *all* IN ALL.

Such a faith as this, when once it obtains full possession of the soul, and is nourished by the affections and the life, enables one deeply to appreciate the heavenly joy with which the apostle uttered the sublime truth:—"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55.

The experiences of human life and its inevitable changes, serve to show the occasion of that joy, and to develope the faith which gave it utterance, into an unfaltering trust that never quivers with doubt, and never loses sight of the power and goodness of God. To stand by the death-bed of the skeptic, and see him thawed out of his icy speculations into the genial sunshine of faith in the resurrection, and at last to behold him departing peacefully in the hope of endless life; to look upon youth, in the bloom of their

days, withering under incurable disease, yet passing into the dark valley, not only without fear, but with a serene joy that can flow alone from the heavenly home; to hear even little children express their belief that Jesus would receive them in his loving arms, and then to see them die as quietly as flowers fold their leaves in evening shadows,—is only to be convinced that the doctrine which adorns itself with such triumphs as these, is the truth of God and the light of the world.

Let us then cultivate our souls for the seed of this faith, that it may produce in us the fruits of righteousness, of resignation, and unfaltering trust.

* LET US PRAY.

FATHER OF ALL, who hast created us in Thine own image and likeness, after the power of an endless life: Awaken us to the solemn and joyful thought that we are only pilgrims in the earth, and that our citizenship is on high. Suffer us not to grovel in the dust, but do Thou mercifully inspire us to look upward, and to place our affections upon things above. Breathe upon the dead and cold bones in the valley, that the slain of Thy judgment may arise and sing with the ransomed of Thy grace. Enable us deeply to feel what we profess to believe, and so to walk before Thee in newness of life, as truly to celebrate Thy praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

DAY WITHOUT NIGHT.

BY REV. A. J. PATTERSON. SCRIPTURE LESSON, JOHN XIV.

—— And there shall be no night there. REVELATION xxii. 5.

IN our present mode of being, the arrangement of alternate day and night is indispensable to the regularity of this curious mechanism which we inhabit. The day, with its vexing and wearisome cares, wheels us willingly and gladly into the arms of night. In life's incessant battle, there is much to disturb us, much to tire our willing labors, and the hours of darkness are welcome hours, because we need them. We feel and understand the wise and fatherly care which ordained the night. Its blessing appeals immediately to our senses. It comes within the scope of experimental knowledge; and its return is so frequent and undeviating, that we cannot fail to read in the book which it opens to us, God's kindness and paternity. It becomes an audible expression of the tender forethought of Him who "knoweth our frame."

Needing, as we do, regular seasons of rest from our labors, how kind the hand which wrought the curtain of darkness! How tender the guardianship which screens the sun's rays, and gives us only the softened starlight! Gentle as the hand of a mother, who veils the cradle of her sleeping child, that its slumber may be sweet and undisturbed!

Into this unceasing order we all look thankfully,

and our hearts declare with one accord, that we wóuld not have it otherwise. We have felt the refreshing and invigorating influence of the night. We know of a truth that it is a divine order from the throne of infinite love.

But there is in the world other night, than that which comes to the weary body. There comes to all of our homes, and falls over all our hearts, a a night of sorrow. We feel its thick darkness gathering about us, fold after fold. We are palsied by its presence, but not in sleep; we are tossed by visions, but they are not the sleeper's pleasant dreams. They are the sad and bitter visions which go out and hover over the cause of this night which is about us. If sin has been the originator of its deep darkness, we deplore that sin; we stand statue-like by its memory, and in agonizing grief wish that the tempter had been the vanquished instead of the vanquisher. Dark and spectre-like, looks the lure which has wrought our sorrow. From the standpoint of this experience, we can see all its deformity. There is no loveliness about it now. And if gain instead of pleasure tempted us, we feel keenly in our souls the deception which has brought us this loss—loss of the light of a serene conscience, and perhaps of an unsullied name,—loss of the peace of righteousness—and gain of nothing but this night, which, like the night of Egypt, we can feel in every fibre of our being.

If the cause of our deep darkness be the absence of a friend in that country whose travellers return not, our visions are of the sick-chamber and the grave. We wonder why the beloved should have

left us so suddenly. We cannot understand the wisdom of the dispensation. Why our hearts are thus darkly shadowed, is beyond our knowledge. We look back to the pleasant daylight of our friend's life, and deplore the joy which has fled from us. Every hour of that existence is sanctified in our souls, by its sudden hiding from our sight. We think of the days that are gone for ever, and they seem all sunshine, shadowless, fadeless sunshine, and our hearts wonder why the day could not have lasted always. We cannot feel that for such a night we had any need. We were not weary of the love which we extended:—no, its mutual joys made the day which has vanished. We see how much of happiness was dependent upon that severed link, and realize, as never before, how closely the tie of love can bind human hearts.

Why the night that envelops our spirits? Would that we could answer as emphatically concerning the night of sorrow, as concerning the night of sleep. And yet it is no less a divine appointment of Him "who careth for us," and who doeth all things well. Could we understand the presence and mission of sorrow, as we understand the mission of the night, we should see that it is even *more* necessary, that it performs a holier office-work. The one operates in the sphere of materialism,—the other in the realm of spirit. The one is for the regulation of the tenement, the other enters in and regulates the habits of its occupant. Night is appointed to subserve the interests of mortality, and is succeeded by a limited day: sorrow instructs and elevates the immortal, which shall escape erewhile into an eternal day.

Though not so visible to our understanding, it is, nevertheless, as certain in its operations, and as benevolent in its results, as the night. Whatever may have caused its presence in our experience, the mission of that sad presence is a mission of tenderness and mercy.

Sorrow for deviations from right strengthens anew the power for good, and leads us to higher and holier attainments in the Christian life. In this regard, its influence is not only salutary, but necessary. It is a divinely-appointed agency in the work of human elevation. According to the plan of the Lord's providence, all souls are destined to immortal existence. The race of humanity was created in the image of the invisible Spirit, even of Him who guides and controls the vast universe. In every department of His laws and operations, we see a nice adaptation. All things subserve their original design, and fulfil their destined mission. God has modes of operation which shall eventuate in the desired result.

That it is His purpose to redeem and purify His defaced image in man, we are abundantly certified in the efforts which revelation avers have been put forth for that object. The Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament, and the Christ of the New, were ordained of His goodness for this benevolent purpose. These instrumentalities are strong and efficient. They have lifted the race, step by step, from barbarism to Christian enlightenment.

But within these human hearts are laws written more permanently than any ever enstamped upon tables of stone. They are not antagonistic to the written law, but auxiliary to, and concordant with it.

And they were written for the same great purpose that the Law and the Gospel were written—for man's benefit and uplifting. Every penalty attached to a violation of these laws, is an appointment as necessary and as benevolent as the law itself.

When we are snared in any of the arts of the many tempters which are about us, it is a wise arrangement that we should experience sorrow for our errors. Were it otherwise,—were man liable to fall into sin without being exposed to the warning voice of this sentinel, there would be no influence to convince him of the difference between right and wrong. Experience is the necessary teacher of this lesson,—that experience which brings peace to those who keep God's law, and makes the storm-tossed sea a fitting emblem of the wrong-doer. We naturally avoid repeating an act which has poisoned the cup of joy and brought upon us the heavy burden of woe. The pangs which have shot through our quick conscience, make us more vigilant in time to come. The warning which comes from the lips of such sorrow, leads us with firmer feet in "the way of God's commandments." As a consequence of transgression, then, sorrow is evidently a holy minister, leading us up from these dark lanes of sin, toward the light of righteousness. It is a divine appointment of the Good Father of All, to guard the ways of the life that now is, and guide us toward our destined and promised rest.

Perhaps we shall not so readily discern the ministry of that deep sorrow which bows our hearts in consequence of the departure of some beloved friend "to

the land of the hereafter." But though more intricate to our understanding, and less readily apprehended, it is nevertheless as truly a fulfilment of God's will and purpose, and an agency of good to the human soul.

The truth that "here we have no continuing city," should help us to study the uses of this sorrow also. We know that the earth is not our abiding-place. The steady march of time bears the living millions to the same goal. Death is appointed for all the living, and no invention of the largest human intellect can avert the decree. Then when our friends leave us, one after another, may not the sundering of earthly ties tend to elevate us above transitory things, and centre our affections upon the enduring inheritance? The heart will instinctively follow its treasures. If they have been laid up in heaven, we shall live there much of life's night-time—live by faith—hoping soon to realize faith's fruition. Our affections are thus drawn nearer to the home which in reality is so very near us, and which should claim by its eternity our love and thoughts, instead of this dim vestibule of the infinite palace.

Then, again, sorrow is not without its influence upon our daily actions. If it lift our affections to things eternal and divine, it will warm and strengthen the tendrils which cling about the divinity in man. The command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, will appeal to us as never before, if some great sorrow has made us feel our frailty and dependence. Is he troubled? We who have been under the cloud and through the sea of affliction, shall know how to lend the needed sympathy. His tearful eye and

bowed frame appeal not vainly to those who have had similar experience.

In view of this tendency of sorrow, it is not too much to say that its mission is a needed mission. It trains and elevates the noblest elements of our humanity, as no other influence can. We need all the helps which subserve the development of our affections. We are too prone to forget the ties which bind us to the race. In the day of prosperity we grow selfish, and the love within us becomes dwarfed or inactive, or turns its current into unholy channels. It is the plan of infinite wisdom to unfold and perfect it, so that in the era of universal redemption it may be said of every soul, "God is all in all."

Sorrow is one of the instrumentalities ordained to this end, and it does well its work. It softens the selfish heart, and infuses a strong and yearning love, thus making us examples of Christian excellence, in being "doers of the word." We may not realize its ministry, we are not always able to see the cause of our soul-experiences and attainments. Indeed, it is not natural for the sad-hearted to speculate about the probable consequences of the discipline which exercises them. Silently, like "the small rain upon the tender herb," does it fall, and do its work of distillation and culture.

Then, though cold and dark about us may be the night of sorrow, it comes not by chance, nor is it appointed in anger. The Hand which fashioned and ordained all things which we see and understand, most truly guides the realm which appeals to our faith for its divine issues. God is especially present in the realm of spirit. Its operations, its weaknesses

and remedies, are kindly guarded by His paternal love. He appoints no ministry which is not for good. Like the prescriptions of the good physician, the remedy, though bitter, contains the oil of healing. Though we may not fully appreciate and understand all the uses of sorrow, while in this mode of being, we are certified that all things are of God, and "God is Love."

In this thought we can be calm and patient. It will unveil in a measure the cause of sorrow in the world. Though we may never realize its uses as we realize the uses of night, we shall feel that in the light of Christian confidence they are partly unveiled to our understanding. Firm reliance upon God, who careth for us, will assure us that all His dispensations shall eventuate in good. It will strengthen us to say at all times, "Thy will be done." Though the idols of our life may be shattered at our feet, faith in a God of changeless goodness will arm us with fortitude to resign them hopefully to His keeping, and enable us to say with the afflicted Job, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord."

But this yearning humanity which we inherit, will have its darkness after all. The strength of the largest faith, though it may soothe, will not heal the heart's wounds. For perfect healing we must look forward to that land where flourishes the "tree of life," whose "leaves are for the healing of the nations." We must see the divine issues of sorrow, and understand them, as we understand the night. This blessing cannot be fully ours while we "see through a glass darkly;" but it shall be ours when

we see "face to face." "There shall be no night there." All the orders of our Father's throne will be unveiled to us when we go "up from this realm of sense." Life's shadowy ways will grow divinely radiant, when we retrospect them, with all their tendencies in view, when we see their need as we see the need of the night, when we feel the fresh vigor of that eternal morning which shall succeed this gloom, there will be in our souls no more querying, "wherefore this sorrow?" Death and evil will appear as necessary links in the providential chain, each with its own great uses pointing toward a common emancipation.

When we look at the language of the text, "There shall be no night there," we understand that, in relation to its present uses, there shall be no need of night. There shall be no mortality to grow weary and need rest. And though we love to think of the "hereafter" as an eternity of explorations and growth in wisdom and excellence, we connect with that satisfying truth, the thought that mortality shall be swallowed up of a life which shall not faint nor fail, but which shall be ever fresh in youth and vigor while eternity endures. No more encumbered with the earthly, there will be no more need of earthly appropriations, nor of earthly discipline. The night of sorrow for our loved ones shall find an eternal morning in the reunion of severed ties.

Then, as we walk under the cloud and amid the sea of earthly sorrow, faith will bid us look gladly to the assurance that "there shall be no night there." The fact that "flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God," disarms this promise of any power

to be other than a blessing. Night for the restoration of our flagging energies, will be no longer necessary when the tendencies to weariness have perished with the mortal. And to escape evermore from the sorrows which draw about our earthly life shadows so dark and dreadful, will be the answer to humanity's holiest prayers. All through our mortal pilgrimage we are crying, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But when the result shows that God's will required us to quaff its bitter dregs, and that from the draught we have gained a strength which could accrue to us in no other way, we shall rejoice that there was sorrow in the world, to try us with its refining fire.

Though necessary, its experience is nevertheless bitter and dark, and in its intensity our consolation consists not so much in the thought that God ordained it for good, as in the vision of faith that "there shall be no night there." This is our holiest consolation. It comes to us when the arrows of sin are piercing us, and we lift up our aching hearts thankfully to God, that sin shall be finished, and "there shall be no night there."

When some thick trouble darkens our mortal path, we are buoyed above it by the hope that the light of the life to come shall be steady and shadowless,—that we hasten to a land of everlasting day, where we shall need no longer the light of the sun, nor of the moon, for God and the Lamb are the light thereof.

When the ties of our love are suddenly snapped by death's cold fingers, O then we cling closer still to the hope that this darkest night which humanity must endure, will be succeeded by a day of intenser

glory than earth-homes ever saw,—that the dear ones are even now in the midst of that glory, rejoicing in a nightless land, with God's everlasting glory round about them.

This faith is the star-light of sorrow's darkness: yea, it is the morning-star and sure harbinger of eternal day. It is the substance of our hope, the evidence of fruition. To him whose life is lighted by it, there can be no such night as those experience upon whose hearts its divine radiance never beamed. When we think of a life in the earth, unblest by faith in a bright and nightless hereafter, we deem it sad and dreary indeed. Yet it is the life which too many are living. In this era of gospel radiance, how many there are who feel the gloom of a hopeless existence! Many with the same sad experiences are bereft of the holy and comforting thought that evil shall be overcome of good, sorrow shall be swallowed up of joy, death be for ever vanquished, and "there shall be no night there." The blessing of this great faith which opens to us the everlasting treasure-chamber of our Father, is not the guest of every heart.

Ye who feel and know its comforting power, O keep it fresh and green in your thoughts, and cherish it for the consolation which it brings you amid earth's unavoidable sorrows, and for the serene radiance with which it glorifies all of life.

And when the gloomy night of trouble envelopes you, faith in the God of Love shall not only tell you that it is good for you to be afflicted, but it shall also point you to the coming life, and whisper tenderly, "There shall be no night there."

LET US PRAY.

FATHER OF LIGHTS, in whom there is no darkness at all: We thank Thee for the revelation of this sustaining faith, and praise Thee for every instrumentality which aids its dissemination in the world. O strengthen and increase its glory continually. May it enlighten our understandings, and enlarge our hearts to run the way of Thy commandments.

And when the night of sorrow broods over us, may its voice of promise calm the turbulent waves of grief, and elevate our thoughts to the contemplation of things heavenly and eternal. Extend its divine influence, we pray Thee, to those who sit in the darkness of unbelief, until the whole earth shall come to a knowledge of *Thee*, whom truly to know is eternal life.

Hear our prayer, we beseech Thee, and answer us according to Thy holy will. And unto Thee, our Father, in the name of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, shall arise our grateful thanksgiving, now and evermore. *Amen.*

GOD UNCHANGEABLE.

BY REV. A. ST. JOHN CHAMBRE. SCRIPTURE LESSON, ISAIAH LV.

That which hath been, is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.—ECCLESIASTES iii. 15.

THE unchangeableness of the Supreme Being is the burden of these words. The Preacher has reference to God's dealings as regards the human family; and, in this Book of Ecclesiastes, he illustrates those dealings by the providences of the Almighty in the material universe. The text is an adjunct to the ninth and tenth verses of the first chapter, wherein it is declared, "The thing which hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, See this is new?—it hath been already of old time, which was before us."

These words, or the words of the text, have no reference to the *transactions of men:* they refer to the transactions of *God.* Their meaning is set before us, and is made plain by an array of those things which God hath ordained of old, and which from the beginning are the same "yesterday, to-day, and for ever," to the end of the present economy.

That they do not refer to what transpires among men,—that is, to the workings of created beings,—but to the eternal counsels of God, and His designs

in regard to humanity, will be evident from the language used in the verse preceding our text, where the Preacher affirms, "I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before Him." The ideas thus conveyed are not illustrated by the actions of mankind; but, as though to avoid all misapprehension, by the steady actions of those things which are about us, and apart from us.

That this is so, will be perceived by a careful perusal of the two preceding chapters,—from which we learn that one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, yet the *earth* abideth for ever. In *that* there is no passing away. It shall remain so long as men and women shall be found to inhabit it, and if at any time its existence shall be accomplished, it will be only in the fulness of that time when this mortal shall put on immortality, and "God shall be all in all."

The Preacher, moreover, is speaking to the men of this world, and his object is to create in their hearts a trust in the Almighty for all time. The design is to give them *reasons*, that they might neither doubt His faithfulness, nor fear His forgetfulness.

So, again, they are pointed to the sun. That, also, hath been ordained of old. It was placed in the heavens to lighten the world, so long as the world should exist. It riseth in the morning, as a strong man prepared for the race. It runs its round, and 'mid the evening shadows sinks beneath the horizon. In popular language, it goeth to the place whence it came, but it rises again on the morrow! It has been,

and it is. It is to be, and it hath already been. And God requireth it, as in years and ages that are past.

The same is true of the wind. It bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof; and, in one sense, we know not whither it goeth, nor whence it cometh. But even the winds obey their prescribed laws, as modern investigations have made clear; and, according to the words of the Scriptures, "It goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits."

"The rivers run into the sea," say the same oracles, "yet the sea is not full; unto the place whence the rivers come, thither they return again." This likewise is true. They come from the *reservoir* of the clouds, and back into the clouds they are drawn.

So with all the resources of nature. We find them stable and sure; and though at times we may fear they are deranged, that seeming derangement is only a means for insuring their stability and perfection. All the laws of nature are as they were in the beginning—perfect and steadfast. And as such, they are fit emblems to shadow forth the character and nature of Him, who is without variableness or shadow of turning.

Times and occasions there may be, when men's hearts may fail them for fear. And strange misgivings may arise, as we seem to feel the hidings of God's face. It may be all bright and beautiful for a moment,—a perfect flood of light, and a long trail of glory,—and then the blackness of desolation. And thus we may doubt the steadfastness of Divine goodness and love. But the sun that shines upon us

to-day, irradiating all around us, shines as steadily, as purely, as brightly, through the dark hours of the night, though we see it not. And the stars that lie so placidly upon the bosom of that vast immensity, making the night so beautiful and glorious, lie as placidly, and smile as sweetly, when the storms are sweeping between them and us!

These things we are too often apt to doubt. Nor is it unnatural that we should doubt. We are finite creatures, and are compassed about by many cares and trials. To us, this world is a vast system of change and vicissitude:—no two days are alike to us —no two nights are the same.

We, also, are for ever changing. The spirits which buoy us up to-day, to-morrow weigh heavily. And the bright hopes, with which one hour we gladden our souls, are overcast and clouded with disappointment in the next. In one moment the world seems very beautiful, and our future pathway is strewn with flowers. Our friends are around us, our children are with us, and the blessings of God are showered bountifully upon our hearts. But, by and by, these scenes are all changed. The dark wings of sorrow are spread, and the clear skies are hidden. Our blessings are withdrawn — perhaps they have been misimproved. Friends leave us. Our children are taken away to the "land of the hereafter:"—perhaps our hearts were too deeply engrossed in their behalf, and *God* has been forgotten. But, however this may be, joy has been exchanged for mourning, and we tremble under the strange dispensations of Providence.

At such times, a thousand doubting questions leap

from our hearts; but the gloom is so intense that no answers come—no kindly smiles are lifted upon us—no sweet voices are heard, whispering "Peace." And so, the heavens are brass and the earth is iron.

All these things are *apparently* against us. And because we see so much change, and forget that real *order* may be running through all this *seeming disorder*, we think it is even so with the GOOD FATHER. He becomes to us, "altogether such an one as ourselves:"—His thoughts are made as our thoughts, and His ways as our ways. In agony it is asked, How can He be unchangeable? How can His love be unfailing? How can His ways be equal?

But is not this shortsighted? Does it not betray our lack of faith, and also our frailty? None of these things, if there be any truth in our text, can militate against the plans or the designs of the Almighty. *He* is not a man, that He should change. He has not so loosely created and appointed, that these things can rise up between His purposes and their accomplishment. These trials and vicissitudes do not stop the sun in its course, or cause it to cease from shining. They do not roll back the stars into primal chaos. They do not alter the steady and majestic movements of the universe. *These* continue as from the beginning; and GOD remains the same! *He* upholds, and guides, and governs. *He* fails not to bring the sunlight and the starlight, and men behold them, and rejoice. He continues the seed-time and the harvest, and the wants of the world are provided for. He still rules among the nations, and iniquity is punished, and virtue rewarded.

Thus, "that which hath been, is now." The con-

tinuance of these things, their unchanging regularity and tireless constancy, are the seal and pledge that they *shall be* in the future as they have been in the past. "God requireth that which is past" still to abide, and to abide until His designs are fulfilled. Otherwise His plans would fail; His counsels would come to nought; the great orbs of heaven would be swept away; the universe would return to its former nothingness; and "chaos would come again!"

But we need have no fear of this. The sufferings, the trials, the many changes of our earthly lot, the *sins*, even, of our humanity, cannot interfere with the progressive working out of God's government. That government is a *moral* government, but it is the government of a *Father*. And He is working all things for the final advantage of His children.

He does not, indeed, change the courses of nature because our shortsightedness would sometimes desire it. It would be a strange world, if it *were* changed to suit the caprices of all its inhabitants! But, the moral world moves on. It may be, apparently, through a vast wilderness of toil and hardship, with the Red Sea before it, and the hosts of Egypt in the rear. But God has lifted upon us the light of His countenance. Whisperings have come down to us from the eternal mansions, and revelations have been made to our hearts. These all point still onward to the promised land of rest and blessedness. And to guide us, and guard us, we have a "pillar of fire by night," and a "pillar of cloud by day," in this "Word" of the living God, and the Cross which was lifted upon Calvary.

There is need, then, that we should ever realize a

deep and rational assurance of God's unchangeableness in regard to His designs. And even though, in the wise providence of the Father, we are chastened in many ways, yet should we remember, that it has not happened to us as it has not happened to others. If the waves roll over our souls, they have rolled over other souls. If the stars are hidden from *us*, they have been, also, hidden from others. So far, the world is to us, as it has been to our fathers, and as it will be to our children. It is thus in the economy of God; but it is in subserviency to the "times of the restitution of all things"—when mutation shall give place to the immutable, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

If we are slow to believe this, it is because we "see through a glass darkly," and not "face to face." It is too much to ask, *Why* it should be so. We are not infinite. Our knowledge does not grasp the Eternal. We see not now, as we will see hereafter, the "end from the beginning." God still is enthroned high above all intelligence; and who, by searching, can find out God? We stand, as it were, midway between the past and the future: but we can neither pierce the future, nor comprehend the past. Could we look back to that period when God was alone,—before this universe was called into being,—and see and understand the working of the Omnipotent Mind, we would find the plans of ages written thereon.

Those plans would be perfect. They would embrace this world, its inhabitants, and their destiny. And if we could follow them into the dim future, we would find adaptations so nice, and causes and effects so regular, that it would be manifest they were all

working to the one great and momentous consummation. At the first glance, all might appear confusion, but the confusion would disappear as the wondrous mechanism would display all its powers and various purposes. And *then*, could we look down into the time when these plans should be accomplished, we would see them merging into a universal sea of glory. We would see, that through these things, now strange and unaccountable, millions of intelligences would be crowned with beauty and happiness for ever.

All the workmanship of God's hand was pronounced "very good" by Him. And this, because of the *end* which all He created should subserve. Humanity was created in accordance with a *perfect* plan, from a *perfect* purpose, and to a *perfect* end. Else was God not perfect. Whatever may have been embraced in that plan, in our behalf, *is now*. Whatever God designs for us in the future, is before Him at the present. And He requires the counsels of the past, as they bear upon our welfare, to be all accomplished.

Suppose we do not comprehend this, it is not strange or wonderful. We are here in the position of men who gaze upon some stupendous building only partly finished. They have not seen the plans of that building, therefore they can perceive neither symmetry nor beauty. But every stone is cut and every board is fashioned. Confusion there may be, but it is more apparent than real; for, with clock-regularity and precision, height after height is reached. Even the rough scaffolding is necessary.

But to the practiced eye of the Architect, there is no confusion, no disorder. The whole building is before him, as though it were completed. And he

sees all the beautiful proportions as they will appear when all the work shall be accomplished.

This faint comparison may help us to realize the difference between the *real* and the *imaginary*—the thoughts of God, and the doubts of men. Spiritually, God is building a Temple, of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone. Every man, and woman, and child, of earth, is a stone of that Temple—rough-hewn it may be, at present, but yet will they be polished and fitly framed together by the power of the Almighty. Gradually, one by one, they are prepared, and fitted into their appointed places. Ages may be occupied in the process; but the building rises, and displays new beauties continually. By-and-by the work will be completed. The last stone—the cap-stone—shall be drawn from the quarry; shall be polished and fashioned; and shall be placed in its own proper position, amid the acclamations of angelic hosts, crying, "Grace, grace, unto it!"

To us, who see not now, nor understand these things, come many doubts and misgivings. Will the building indeed be finished? Can these rough stones be polished? Will they be honored by the Lord with a place in his glorious Temple?

Such is God's plan! Such is God's design! He laid the foundations of His work in the past ages of eternity, when Christ was appointed the *head of every man*. He gave him power over *all flesh*, that he might give eternal life to *as many* as God has given him. He appointed all the means, and prepared for all contingencies in the progress of the great work. And this we would expect of a wise Master-builder; nor are we disappointed. In His eye, the building

is completed. And none the less so, though ages may intervene ere *we* see the full proportions; for a thousand years are with God as a single day, and a single day as a thousand years!

All the departments of the scheme of universal redemption pass in array before the Almighty: So much so, that it can with truth be said, in relation to the whole, "That which hath been is now:"—all that He has done, and all that He has purposed, are present *to Him* as they were from the beginning: "And that which is to be hath already been:"—all that yet remains to be accomplished in the perfection of His designs, has been determined from everlasting. "And God requireth that which is past:"—His unchangeableness, together with His faithfulness, are pledged to meet the obligations into which He has voluntarily entered; and they *require* that what He has purposed in the past, shall not fail in any, even the least degree.

Where, then, is there ground for fear or doubt? Surely God *has* purposes and designs:—this *cannot* be rationally denied. That He has appointed all things in accordance therewith, reason and revelation both proclaim. Therefore, *we* may *know*, as the author of our text also knew, "That whatsoever God doeth, it shall be *for ever;* nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." His measures never can be broken. His mind never can be turned. His counsels concerning our final destiny are never new. *All* his purposes shall be effected; and the whole universe can neither defeat nor destroy them. Inconstancy may appear to us; but it is only apparent,—there is *constancy* after all!

We cannot conceive that it should be otherwise We cannot believe that an infinitely perfect Being should change. It cannot be, therefore, that God has of late years adopted this plan of salvation. We cannot believe, as we are sometimes told, that the world has been blasted by the mildew of sin, that the creatures of His workmanship have become utterly and thoroughly depraved. And that *then* it became necessary for new purposes and new plans; and that, to meet the pressing demand, strange things must needs be done. No, we cannot believe this.

Is it possible that God has been thwarted? Is it possible He ever failed in any undertaking? If so, what assurance have we for the future? Can it be that in this lone corner of the universe only, He has found rebellion and anarchy? Why have not the lights of heaven been darkened, and the stars been lost from their orbits? Do all things else obey the high behests of the Almighty, remain steadfast, and subserve their designed purposes, and this world alone come short? Believe it, who can!

True, in contradiction to all this, we are sometimes assured that God eternally designed some for happiness and some for ceaseless woe. But this thought is too fearful to be cherished for a moment. Rather would we assign it a place with the dismal theories of a dark and barbarous age. It would be a stain too awful to rest upon the character of "OUR FATHER." It would be a design which *we* would not *dare* to assign to an infinitely holy and *just* God. We remember the beautiful words of the inspired writer, "God is Love,"—and remembering, we feel convinced that all His plans were formed in love, and

that all His designs in our regard, are surcharged with the same glorious quality. All that He has done, and is doing, for our race, proclaims this with ever-increasing brightness. All His revelations in His Divine Son seal it to our hearts. And the life of Jesus; his elevation upon the tree; his resurrection from the grave; his ascension in the clouds of glory,—are the earnests that it will abide for ever. Every child of Adam is precious in the sight of God,—more precious, because nobler and grander, than the whole material universe. And His love, and His care, will follow them *always*, for they have been purchased and redeemed by the blood of Christ!

This is the plain declaration of His Holy Volume. His promises are clear: He will never leave us, never forsake us. Though we pass through the fire, we shall not be harmed. Though the swelling waters surround us, He will support. Though all things should appear against us, He is our stay and our comfort. The powers of evil can have no dominion over us, for Christ has spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly. The grave cannot hold us, for the Saviour has broken its bars, and risen a conqueror from its gloom. And the "spirit of man, that goeth upward," *cannot be lost*, for life and immortality have been brought to light by the Redeemer, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. With Him it shall dwell for ever! Unto Him *all* shall likewise be gathered home. Tears shall be wiped away. Sorrow shall be unknown. Sin shall not tarnish. Separations shall not take place. Death shall be destroyed.

It is all written, in letters of love, in the heart of

Jehovah. *He* hath written it there, and it is there now. Because it is written there now, it shall remain there for ever. And all the spirit of that writing shall be accomplished, for God requireth the fulfilment of His past designs!

LET US PRAY.

HOLY FATHER, we thank Thee for these glorious truths. May they continue with us evermore, and be sanctified to the welfare of our souls. In the midst of all life's cares and sorrows, may they be to us sources of consolation and joy. And when overtaken by temptation, may they strengthen us; when deluded by sin, may their memory guide us back to Thy love,—even to the love which never fails, and which knows no bounds.

Follow us, we beseech Thee, with Thy merciful kindness all our days. Make our last hours peaceful, and cheer them with the assurance of eternal life. And in the fulness of time unite us with the loved ones gone before, through Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

GERM AND GROWTH.

BY REV. SYLVANUS COBB. SCRIPTURE LESSON, MARK IV.

For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.—MARK IV. 28.

THIS was spoken by our Lord, for the purpose of illustrating the operation and progress of his religion in the human mind. From the twenty-sixth verse it reads, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

The Christian religion, the operations of which are represented by the figure employed in the text, is here, as often elsewhere called the kingdom of God, because its influence in the heart constitutes a government, a kingdom there, which is heavenly, which is indeed of God.

This figurative illustration opens a wide, an interesting field for improvement. To come in order at the several parts of the great subject which it presents for our consideration, I will invite your attention,

1st. To the mind's natural susceptibility of religious cultivation: "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself." That is, when, as mentioned in the preceding verse, the husbandman throws seed into the earth,

the earth causes it to germinate. There is a natural quality in the soil which has an affinity for the seed sown, and gives action to its life, that it sends forth its blade, its stock, its branches, and its fruit.

This figure represents to our understandings, in a most interesting light, the adaptedness of religious truth to the intellectual and moral nature of man. All who officiate as moral and religious teachers, either in public or in private, have reason to be encouraged by this divine lesson, as having a field of labor before them, in which their efforts may not be in vain. We are not set at work in a field where our labor can effect naught, until the soil is by a miracle changed from its natural state. We are at work where our own labor may have something to do in the way of bringing the unproductive desert into a fruitful field.

There is no favor here for the doctrine of total, innate, hereditary depravity in man, which renders him naturally incapable of understanding and receiving the word of Christian truth. Such doctrine is discouraging to teachers, and to all who truly believe it. If mankind were naturally incapable of understanding the gospel, and of receiving any good impressions, and of improving by its influence, we should see no fitness in our labors when preaching to instruct and convert them. There would be no more affinity between our communications and the conversion of a sinner, than there is between the forms of words recited by the juggler, and the performance of his feats of legerdemain. It cannot be the influence of the preached word that converts the man, if he cannot understand the word, and receive the influence of it, until after he is by a miracle converted.

But it will be said that the Bible teaches the doctrine of conversion, or the new birth; and how find place for the admission of this doctrine, if mankind are *naturally* capable of spiritual improvement by moral and religious culture? I answer: This view of the moral constitution of human nature gives place for the reception of the scripture doctrine of conversion, as the view that the earth has a quality to bring forth fruit of itself, admits the process of converting a thorny plat into a fruitful field. Such is the natural state and order of things, that the earth will, if not dressed and tilled, become overgrown with weeds and briers, and fruitless shrubs and trees. Yet the soil is not totally depraved. The change of the wilderness to a fruitful field does not require that the creative power of God should radically change the original quality of the soil. There is yet a natural quality in the soil to vegetate the scattered seed, and carry forward the nutritious plants and herbs, when it is properly dressed and tilled. Let the cumbersome, profitless growth be taken away, the soil opened to the fructifying influences of the sun and rains, and the good seed deposited in its mellowed surface, and its energies, which had given growth to useless thorns and shrubs, will carry forward the useful grass and grains. So with the mind that wants cultivation, and is encumbered with noisome errors: Let those errors be cleared away, and the mind be sown with the word of truth, and the culture of good religious instruction be kept in operation to bear upon it, and then such mind will be fruitful of the moral graces.

This is the view which the scriptures give us of man. He is reformable and improvable by the influ-

ence of moral means. Imperfect as man is, and prone to error, there is yet in him a natural love of truth, when it is fairly presented to the understanding. Hence the Saviour said of the Jews, that their eyes were blinded, and their understanding was darkened, lest they should see and understand, and be converted and healed. If there were in man a natural hatred of truth, then the more clearly truth should be presented to the understanding, the more intensely would he hate it. But as it is, the reason why men do not love the Gospel, is that they do not understand it.

Hence the labors of Christian teaching, to impart to mankind the knowledge of the Gospel in all its principles of faith and practice, operate to the conversion of sinners from the error of their ways, and to their growth in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. The heart of man is the field in which may be implanted and cultivated all those principles which are the adorning of moral natures, and the beautifying and enriching of human society in all its relations. There is in the heart a soil in which these principles, when planted there, will germinate, even as "the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself."

2d. The growth of these Christian graces must be from small beginnings, and by gradual progression: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." This is an interesting part of our subject, important to be well understood. It applies to the great Gospel scheme as a whole, with regard to its progress in the universe of mind,—and to every single principle of the Christian religion, in every individual soul.

The same subject is treated in the parable of the

mustard seed. "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." While this represents the destined growth of the cause and kingdom of Christ in the world, from a small beginning, it also represents the advancement of the same kingdom in each individual heart where it becomes established; and it is in this latter application that I shall chiefly improve the subject at the present time.

This branch of our subject, the progressive improvement of the Christian graces, has been unhappily neglected, and illy understood. The fashionable religionists of the age, who say much of there being but two characters, saint and sinner, have made every thing of having, in some technical sense, *experienced religion*. Their spiritual teachers and judges, when they seek to know whether they are saints of Christ and heirs of heaven, instead of inquiring to what extent they have been cherishing, and are cultivating, the experimental and practical Christian graces, examine whether they have, at some past time, had a train of mental exercises, which they have established a form of under the name of *religious experience*. If they are found to have had such an experience, though they may be brutal in their families, and adversaries to the peace of society abroad, they are reckoned as saints, and heirs of the promises of God, having been changed from nature to grace! And they whose characters are ever so amiable, have not

reckoned upon this circumstance as constituting any essential part of their claim to the appellation of saint, but for this have relied on the aforesaid mental experience. And they pass the question to others, "have you got religion?" as if religion were something of equal length and breadth in all who may have obtained it, to be at once gotten entire, and kept entire by keeping up the remembrance and celebration of the mental frame by which they were thought to have obtained it.

Nor have the great mass of professed Universalists been essentially less in the dark on this branch of the subject, *the growth of the Christian graces.* Many, too many there are, who imagine that when they have become freed from the unhappy errors and superstitions of certain others on the leading doctrines of the Gospel, and have given the assent of their minds to the faith of God's universal love, and of the final salvation of all mankind, they have then got through: they have attained to the end of their studies, the goal of their wishes;—they have *learned out.*

Poor mistaken souls! they have but just begun. They have yet seen but little of what there is to be seen, of the beauties and glories of the Christian truth. They form no conception of the adaptedness of the gospel to all their relations and circumstances in life, and the capacity of its graces for extending and growing, branching wide and towering high. Their faith, which they have admitted into their heads and displayed upon their tongues, should be received into their hearts as the *seed* of righteousness, to send forth many thrifty shoots, into wide-spreading fruitful trees.

Now, all these shoots of righteousness, however small they may appear, as mere tender blades, must be cultivated and nurtured, or we shall not be rich in the fruits of Christian joy and blessedness. We believe in God's love to mankind. This is a good beginning. But if we stop here, and devote no more sober attention to the subject, this belief will become a mere cold speculation of the mind, dead for the want of watering and culture. To *enjoy* this correct theoretic belief, we must have the love of God, which it contemplates, near to us in our hearts. We must give devout attention to the operations of God's love around us every day. We must observe it in the rays of the sun, and in the showers of rain; — we must see it in the silver moon and twinkling stars; — we must contemplate it in the numberless plants, and flowers, and fruits of the earth; — we must inhale it with the balmy air we breathe; — we must reciprocate it in all the relations of life.

By this sort of attention and culture shall we find the love of God near to us, its spirit ever growing within us. We shall live, and have our being in it. And our faith, our belief from the abstract testimonies of the gospel, in the final triumph of love divine over every evil, will grow and mature into perfect assurance, a foretaste of the glory promised. We shall have the witness in ourselves, "the spirit itself also bearing witness with our spirits, that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ."

There are a great many apparently small things that must be attended to, if we will be blessed with improved graces, and great enjoyments. We must

carry our faith of love divine into the family circle, and out into all its relations. Every little attention which the different members of the family can devote to the promotion of each other's happiness, should be sacredly regarded, and promptly and cheerfully performed.

Are you inclined to ask what these little attentions and kindnesses can amount to? Look at the peasant; see him with labor and care loosening the earth and plucking the weeds among the tender blades of corn. What are these little spires, that he should thus carefully weed and nurture them? They are the embryo of the golden harvest, which shall fill his garners, and crown his table with abundance. The little *blade* must be nurtured, or it cannot attain to the ear; and the full corn in the ear. So must every private virtue be cultivated, even in the smallest department of its operation, or we can never abound in the most prominent graces of the gospel, nor feast the soul upon their heavenly fruits.

Suppose the husband enters the house from his labors; and because everything does not dance into its place before him, to his thoughtless, capricious wishes, he assails the wife, who has been toiling for his comfort, with severe reproach and crimination. Or, suppose the husband enters his dwelling for refreshment and rest, and for the interchange of kind and respectful attentions, and his ears are stunned and his heart appalled with the fret, and jeer, and scold of the wife, who harrows up his soul with her discordant notes, because he has not been able entirely to rid the world of disappointment and care.

How dwelleth the love of God in these? How

dwelleth there the spirit of that religion which says unto husbands, "Love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;" and unto wives, "reverence your husbands." If that retreat, for which the heart sighs fondly when abroad, that sacred dwelling, *home*, is a bedlam, a den of dark, malignant passions, where is peace? Where is our gospel faith? Is it only something to talk about, and not to live in? Is it familiar only abroad, and a stranger at home? Here we must cultivate it, first of all. It must be an every-day concern with us. And all those little every-day kindnesses must be cultivated, which will grow and ripen into great and productive virtues. It is of littles that the whole of our virtue and happiness must be composed; and the world is morally poor, because it will not give suitable attention to moral and social culture, by the improvement of little incidents, and of ordinary daily opportunities.

The immediate consequences of our actions, right or wrong, are not all, nor the most important considerations. If a trifling wrong is committed, that is not all. The mere commission of that error, as to its immediate and visible effects, is but a small part of the evil. The worst is its effects upon the mind. It gradually weakens the moral sense, and makes way for a little more, and a little more wrong. It is as the little run of water over the mound which stays a mighty fountain. It is not that little waste of water for the time being, that constitutes the greatest evil; but it is the wearing away of the channel, which by-and-by becomes a broad and deep chasm, and pours down a frightful overwhelming flood.

And so, on the other hand, with regard to little

kindnesses and virtues. It is not their immediate visible consequences that are most important, but their chastening and improving operations in and upon the mind. They are the germs of multiplying, growing, and magnificent graces, whose fragrance shall reach unto heaven, and whose fruits shall bless the earth.

This principle of cultivating those little germs, those tender blades, which shall grow and mature into exalted virtues, must also be carried out into the intercourse of the wider social circle. Attention should be devoted to the improvement of the social affections, that they may mature into that enlightened Christian friendship, which shall constitute a strong indissoluble bond of union, making our fraternal circle a family of heaven. And to this end we must chasten our thoughts, and make our words to be as apples of gold in pictures of silver. Christian plainness is commendable; but boorishness and churlishness must not be mistaken for Christian simplicity and plainness. Much is done to affect society by the use of the tongue. "There is that speaketh like the piercing of a sword, but the tongue of the wise man is health." One may enter the social circle, and with his tongue he may inflict a wound upon the feelings of all, without a cause, and excite evil and unhappy passions; or he may so speak as to improve their minds, strengthen their affections, and promote their enjoyments.

Finally, the mind, with all its noble faculties and affections, is capable of vast improvement. When you have taken hold of the most prominent principles of the gospel, you have but begun the work of reli-

gious progression. These prominent principles of faith must give a tone to the disposition of the mind, and be carried out in practice, that they may become amalgamated with the elements of the soul, and constitute the kingdom and the blessedness of heaven there. Then the faith and the practical life will mutually strengthen and improve each other, and that love which is of God will become the governing principle of the whole man.

Brethren, let it be our study to improve, and to aid the improvement of each other, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

* LET US PRAY.

We humbly beseech Thee, our Father, that the good seed of Thy word, now sown among us, may take such deep root, that neither the burning heat of affliction may cause it to wither, nor the cares of this world choke it, but that, as seed sown in good ground, it may bring forth the fruit of righteousness.

Let the gentle showers of Thy mercy visit it, and the light of heaven be upon it as the clear shining after rain, that the germ, and the blade, and the ear, and the ripe harvest, may alike show forth Thy praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

SEEING THE INVISIBLE.

BY REV. A. A. MINER. SCRIPTURE LESSON, HEBREWS XI.

——"Seeing Him who is invisible."—HEBREWS xi. 27.

THE apparent solecism of the text is rather seeming than real. It lies in its letter and not in its sense. A divine truth is communicated in human terms—in terms so compounded, however, as to shut us out from a literal interpretation of them.

The same is true, to a great extent, throughout the Bible, and especially throughout the New Testament. A language born exclusively of heavenly things, would be quite unintelligible to men. It would need to be translated into human languages before the divine thought could be apprehended by mortals. The Holy Spirit, therefore, from the very necessity of the case, uses terms which have grown up in connexion with material things, but uses them in such impossible combinations, as to preclude a literal interpretation and suggest the spiritual truth.

Thus, Christ speaks of himself as the "living bread which came down from heaven, of which if any man eat, he shall live for ever." To the woman at the well of Samaria he said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The confession of Peter, he calls a "rock;" himself, the "way;" and

his truth, the "light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

In like manner, the author of our text speaks of "seeing Him who is invisible"—beholding manifestations of the unseen God; and in calling Him the "invisible" God, he distinguishes Him from all the gods of the heathen world.

But while the true God is invisible, He is by no means unreal. The deepest things in nature are everywhere the invisible things. All that strikes the eye or appeals to sense, is mutable, changeful, transient; while much that is invisible—that does not address itself to sense—is unchangeable and permanent.

That most subtile and secret, yet omnipresent force, which rules supreme over the most distant orbs as over the minutest grains of sand, and from whose control no living thing is exempt, is a power that eludes all our scrutiny. No sense is acute enough—no science penetrating enough—no analysis searching enough—to gain access to the sanctuary where it dwells. The geologist explores and measures the strata of the earth; the metallurgist defines the tenacity of the various metals; the anatomist ascertains the contractile force of the muscular system; but each of these facts is, as it were, a stone upon the mouth of a cavern within which all is invisible and unknown. So Newton may demonstrate the law of gravitation; Kepler may determine its increase or decrease with variation of distance; but no philosopher can define the power itself, or explain how its invisible bonds attach to visible worlds, and defy all obstructions throughout infinite space. Thus, in-

visible though this power is, its transcendent reality is everywhere manifest.

The wonder of such a force is increased when we consider kindred forces in connexion with it. While bodies are under the permanent influence of gravitation, they may be reconstructed by chemical affinities, may retain their integrity through cohesive attraction, or peculiarly adjust themselves under magnetic influence. No less invisible than gravitation, each of these forces may act in harmony with it, or in all possible degrees of opposition thereto, without proving in anywise an obstruction to its power. Have we not here suggestions of the possible existence of a Supreme though invisible God?

Turn to the floral world. What more unlike than the black mould of the earth, often offensive to sense, and the delicate tints and odors of the violet, the lily, or the rose? And yet from the one in its loathsomeness, is elaborated the other in all its delicacy and beauty. Where lies the power by which such a miracle is wrought? Where the laboratory in which it operates? Clearly, in the tiny seed. Examine that seed. In what does that power consist? Neither sense nor science can answer. You may analyze it chemically, anatomize it physiologically, or pulverize it mechanically, and you will not solve the problem. It still lies beyond your penetration. And when we talk learnedly of the "principle of life" as the central fact in organic chemistry, it is but a formula for our ignorance. The invisible still holds the secret locked up in its mysterious chambers, and exhorts us to cherish faith in the equally invisible God.

Nor are the like suggestions wanting in the higher

domain of organic life. Contrast the new-born babe with the matured Christian philosopher. The one lies before you in utter unconsciousness. Its moral and intellectual nature are entirely dormant. An involuntary contraction of certain of its muscles appropriates its nutriment, carries on the process of respiration, and distinguishes it from mere inanimate clay. Though a living organism, it is among the most helpless, dependent, and unconscious, of all the creatures of God. But for parental loves, and the tender care they bring, it could not survive an hour.

The other stands erect in the full dignity of cultured manhood. He is skilled in science, history, and law. He weighs the earth in his balance, and measures the distances of the stars. He numbers the years of a forest tree by its grains, of the earth by its strata, and of the heavens by their eclipses, transits, and occultations. He recognizes the necessary law of cause and effect, and looks through nature up to nature's God. His moral sense approves the golden rule, and he testifies his loyalty by a life of love.

Thus separated by a seemingly impassable gulf, there is yet a magic tie that unites this unconscious babe with this Christian philosopher—a subtile power that can ripen the former into the latter. That power is its invisible soul. In the cultured philosopher, do we not *see* that invisible power? Is not this the deepest fact of his being?—the foundation, as it were, of his nature?—the reality amid what else is but seeming?—the substance where all besides is shadow? How much more real and important, then, may be the existence of the invisible God; and with what force do such analogies urge us to confide in

the Unseen, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being."

Moses had learned this lesson. God had given him a discernment of His power. The miracle of the leprous hand, of the rod changed into a serpent, and of the water of the river turned into blood, had convinced him of the authority and providence of the true God. Called to lead out the children of Israel from their thraldom in Egypt, he was loyal to the divine command. The king threatened, but Moses feared him not. He forsook Egypt, and endured every trial as "seeing Him who is invisible."

Equally convincing manifestations of Himself are afforded in every age. Continually varying in their form, they meet the demand of every style of intellect, and of every condition of heart. The manifold resources of divine truth are constantly countervailing the skepticism of man, whether originating in the understanding, or springing from a deeper and more dangerous cause, and making the Supreme Ruler to be recognized.

You behold Him, first of all, *in His works.* It is no less true now than anciently, that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handywork." Now, as in the olden time, "day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." At the present, as in the distant past, "there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Wherever those works extend, they testify of Him who made them. In their greatness

they proclaim His *power*. The philosopher may measure and weigh them, but the very numbers will exceed his comprehension. Like our formulas for the infinite, they define and limit what we cannot explore.

We are amazed at the vastness of those works. As we gaze upon the rushing cataract, the snow-capped mountain, or the tumultuous sea, we are obliged to confess our inability to appreciate even these isolated facts in nature. They grow upon our eye at every repetition of the view. And when, in our conscious weakness, we turn from a part to the whole—from an inconsiderable elevation to the earth itself—how does our amazement increase! The altitude of the mountain becomes unnoticeable in comparison with the earth's diameter. The rapidity of the destructive avalanche becomes a snail's pace in contrast with the lightning-speed of our globe in its orbit. Exceeding twenty times the velocity of a cannon ball, its swiftness transcends our utmost power of conception, and compels us to admit the omnipotence of the arm by which the earth has been thus hurled into space.

The emotions of grandeur thus begotten within us, are indefinitely enhanced as we turn to the many other globes of our own home-system, some of which are many hundreds of times larger than the earth, and others move with many times greater velocity. And yet the most thorough exploration of the solar system but introduces us to the vestibule of the temple of Creation, the light of many of whose indwelling orbs reaches us only after a journey of centuries.

Nor are the exhibitions of *wisdom* in the outward universe less marvellous. If we are filled with astonishment at the inconceivable power displayed in the greatness and velocity of the innumerable orbs of heaven, much more are we filled with admiration at the order and harmony which mark all their movements. To secure this, what exact balancing of forces! What skilful adjustment of magnitudes, distances, and rates of motion! What mathematical precision in the regulation of system within system, resolving all into final harmony about a single centre! Other circumstances remaining the same, no one of these orbs could be a grain more or a grain less; the average distance or rate of motion of no one could be more or less, without bringing disorder and ultimate ruin, not to one system alone, but to the entire material universe. Their very perpetuity, therefore, is proof of their harmony. Seeming irregularities are shut up to prescribed limits, and, like the oscillations of a pendulum, are balanced by counter-irregularities, thus preserving the harmony of law, and making possible exact predictions of future phenomena. The fulfilment of such predictions, after centuries have elapsed—not simply on the day and hour named, but at the very moment—is a sufficient vindication of the existence of law in every part, and of the wisdom that arranges all.

From the mathematics of nature we turn to its beauty, and the divine *goodness* shines on our pathway. Why is the grass green, the sky blue, the flower variegated in its loveliness, and its fragrance grateful to sense? Why do the birds sing in forest and field, the fishes sport in river and lake, the lambs

skip on hill-side and lawn, and the children gambol 'mid study and toil? Why is sense a channel of pleasure, youth a season of gladness, and life itself a joy? Why does the cloud water the parched earth, the spring-time come at the call of sunshine and shower, and autumn yield its harvests? Because the Divine goodness has so ordained. This is the sufficient and only answer: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." In this we rest, as "seeing Him who is invisible."

But God is manifest also *in His law.* A moral governor, in giving law to moral beings, would give utterance to his own moral conceptions. If constrained by nothing from without, he would exhort his subjects to the attainment of what he deemed his own chief good; and command those virtues, and those only, which himself possessed. If he found his chief good in the subjugation of appetite, he would not command indulgence; if in industry and enterprise, he would not command idleness; if in love and humility, he would not command hatred and pride. Thus, a law voluntarily given proclaims the law-giver, and furnishes his estimate of possible things.

Now God is such a law-giver. He could have been under no constraint. His law was voluntarily given. He sums up all excellence in that law. To its commands the universe owes allegiance. The soul of the infinite details of duty is embodied in two comprehensive edicts: namely, first, "Thou shalt love the

Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength;" and second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The Saviour himself declares, that "On these two commands hang all the law and the prophets." Thus love is presented us as the supreme good. What inference more natural than that God Himself is love! Not, indeed, love to the exclusion of justice, rectitude, or any righteous quality. On the contrary, every element of holiness is embraced in that single term. In loving God, therefore, we love holiness; and in loving holiness, we are holy.

We say to the doubter of the Bible, that this law, though written in the Bible, is independent of the Bible, and was promulgated anterior to all Bibles. It is written equally in the nature of man, and is woven into the very constitution of all things. Strike away the Bible, and this law, with the obligations it imposes, would still remain. The experience of all generations, during nearly six thousand years, has verified its claims, and demonstrated its fitness to promote human welfare.

Our argument, then, is based on no assumed value of what some are pleased to term "musty records," but on the experience of ages. Love is the supreme law. Its authority as such is everywhere acknowledged. This law is written in our hearts, and utters itself in our moral sense. And as these are the workmanship of God, they proclaim Him to be a God of love. In these suggestions of the moral sense, and in this lesson from universal experience, not less than in the revelations of the divine word, we "see Him who is invisible."

God is still further manifest *in His judgments.* Let me here, however, guard you against misapprehension. In making mention of the Divine judgments, we do not exclusively, nor even chiefly, allude to the special vindications of His law. While He has seen fit, at various periods, signally to interpose His power to arrest the career of wicked men and nations, He much more frequently employs natural instrumentalities. And if we are called upon to recognize His retributive hand in the flood that swept away the antediluvian world, in the fire and brimstone from heaven upon the cities of the plain, and in the sudden death of Herod, of Ananias and Sapphira, and of infamous men of our own time; it is no less our duty to discern the manifestations of His righteous indignation in the natural entanglements, the self-condemnation, and the premature overthrow, which sin so commonly occasions. The destructive passions which it provokes, the deadly personal conflicts into which it hurries its votaries, and the war and carnage in which it baptizes the nations of the earth, are but so many forms in which the Divine thunderbolts are hurled among men. God's condemnation of the Jewish people was as distinct and awful as it could have been if an earthquake, instead of the Roman armies, had been employed in their overthrow. Two hundred years before their Babylonish captivity, the nation had plunged into one deep of iniquity after another, until the gracious guidance of the Most High was temporarily withdrawn from them. The mandate of Jehovah—"Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone"—consigned the guilty nation to confusion and thraldom. And though this people

were afterwards partially restored, yet they did not thoroughly repent, but filled up their measure of iniquity, that the wrath of God, by the Roman power, might be poured out upon them, to the uttermost. And those peoples of the earth in the present time, who exercise tyrannical sway, and nurture a lust of power and an unholy ambition, are rewarded according to their works, in blood and slaughter, in internal commotions, and in general insecurity. Those communities which even tolerate hypocritical or in anywise vicious governments, will be likely to give themselves up to sensuality and the indulgence of passion, and thus prepare the way for those startling social crimes so often arresting attention—robberies, domestic poisonings, suicides, and other forms of death. God thus executes His judgments upon them. "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind."

He forgets not His paternal relation to man. He does not find delight in judgment. "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment." But sin is a curse. God calls upon the sinner to put it away. If he heeds not the call, God arises in His terrible majesty, and at the bidding of a severe but genuine favor, "smites the earth with a curse." "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

I remark, lastly, that God is seen *in His grace*. After various providences during the lapse of four thousand years, the world had sunk into the death

of sin and unbelief. "Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." Judgment had succeeded transgression, and partial reformation had followed judgment only to disappear again under new forms of temptation. A higher display of the saving power of God, alone could establish the hearts of men in Himself. His arm was not shortened, that it could not save. His mercy was not "clean gone forever." Hence He gave His "only-begotten and dearly-beloved Son," that "whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." That Son "tasted death for every man." "He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." And in the very moment of his self-sacrifice, he breathed upon the world the richest grace of heaven, in his prayer for the salvation of his murderers. With what intense emphasis can Paul now say, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

What rich hopes spring out of this grace! How does the very sin of the Jewish rulers call forth its highest displays! Their rejection of Christ subjects him to privation. Their hardness of heart gives occasion for his perseverance. Their malicious attempts to overthrow both him and his cause, enable him to show how great is his love for the world, and to triumph in the very moment of his supposed defeat. We thus learn that the wrath of man may become the ladder by which grace shall mount its throne—that God, by indirect ways, no less than by direct, can humble the pride of man,

exalt the mercy of heaven, and further His purposes of infinite grace. If the wickedness of the world can be thus overruled for good, what shall we not hope from the dominion of Him who is goodness itself.

Still higher joy is born of his grace, in the hopes we cherish for the dear departed. If the triumphs of his love in the hour of his crucifixion, shed the splendors of heavenly light upon human pathways, how much more his resurrection from the dead! Faith at once beheld the lost of earth reassembled in heaven. The bereaved are no longer desolate. Sorrow might abide as an evening guest, but joy dawned with the morning. Earth became the pilgrim's transient dwelling-place, and heaven his immortal home. The tear of grief was dried, aud the smile of joy reposed where had been the home of sorrow. It is in the grace of God, thus conquering sin, disarming death, and triumphing in glory, that we "see Him who is invisible."

Thus have we remarked on the manifestations of God in His works, in His law, in His judgments, and in His grace. Invisible, and yet we see Him everywhere:—

"Above, below, where'er we gaze,
Thy guiding finger, Lord, I view,
Traced in the midnight planet's blaze,
Or glistening in the morning dew:
Whate'er is beautiful or fair,
Is but Thine own reflection there."

Would we enjoy the exhibitions of Himself which God gives us, we must behold them with an eye of faith. We must draw near to Him in our inmost *thought*, and be loyal to Him with all our souls.

"My son, give me Thy heart," is among His most vital commands. And how can we give Him our hearts, except we love Him; and how can we claim to love Him, unless we honor and obey Him.

"Great Source of life and light,
Thy heavenly grace impart,
And by Thy holy spirit write
Thy law upon my heart.
My soul would cleave to Thee;
Let nought my purpose move;
O let my faith more steadfast be,
And more intense my love!"

LET US PRAY.

ALMIGHTY GOD, sanctify to us this holy day, and the testimonies of Thyself with which Thou hast surrounded us. Let the glory of the outer world, the revelations of Thy truth, and the lessons of Thy providence, beget loyalty of soul and bring us into communion with Thee. And Thine be the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. *Amen.*

WAY, TRUTH, AND LIFE.

BY REV. A. B. GROSH. SCRIPTURE LESSON, JOHN XV.

JESUS saith unto him, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. JOHN xiv. 6.

OUR text is more than a mere *poetic* figure—it is a *correct* one. It presents us with a highly important reality, and is therefore even more than a correct *figure*—it is *a fact*—a spiritual truth. Jesus, himself, (in his own person, life and being,—and not merely his doctrine or his Gospel,) is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, by which we have access unto, and knowledge of, and communion with, our heavenly Father.

Christ is embodied Christianity. He not only taught, but illustrated and lived it; and by his spirit and his life vitalized it for all time to come. Hence in life and spirit he manifested its doctrine and fulfilled its precept. Were the precepts and teachings of the Gospels obliterated from human records, they could be supplied from his life and character; or were the record of his life lost from the sacred pages, its character and spirit could be deduced from his teachings concerning God, and the precepts he delivered for the obedience of men. He, therefore, who understands well and truly the character and spirit of Jesus, is thoroughly acquainted with Christianity also.

"But is there no knowledge of God—no way of

becoming acquainted with the great Creator—but by learning of him through Christ?" Our text does not so affirm; and the Scriptures themselves declare a contrary sentiment.

Nature is a material embodiment of much of its Divine Author's mind and purpose. "For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." Romans i. 20.

God's constant Providence furnishes a glorious frame-work of His goodness—though in it are many deep chasms and dark shadows which human reason can neither fathom nor explain, and which the Gospel only can fill with His grace and brighten with His glory. "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls?" "Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. If, then, God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more you, oh ye of little faith?" Luke xii. 24, 27, 28.

And the Law and the Prophets, even aside from their teachings concerning the Messiah, have unfolded to our knowledge great and glorious as well as awful things concerning God, as the Creator and the Sovereign of our universe, and the Benefactor and Dis poser of all beings.

Yea, even the movings of God's spirit in the soul of man, reveal to many His excellent loving-kindness.

"What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask *Him?*" Matt. vii. 9–11.

But it must be admitted that though we may know much of God as the Creator, the Lawgiver and the moral Governor of the universe—as the Sovereign, the Benefactor and Preserver of our race—yet in all this knowledge we have not come to embrace him as *our Father.* The Old Testament writers, it is true, have partially revealed Him in this character and relation, as the Father of the fatherless, and with intimations that He is the Father of spirits, and of the human race. But these intimations, so few and faint, are intermingled with so much of the stern and awful, that the human affections seem rather transfixed in reverence, than attracted in trustful, yearning affection. Jesus, alone, of all religious teachers, has presented God to the *heart* of humanity in the full, attractive, loving tenderness of the paternal relation. Gathering up and including all that is revealed concerning God in all other modes and systems, Jesus has added the great truth of God's actual Fatherhood, (and of His constant, changeless, tender love to His offspring,) to all else that may be known of Deity. And in so doing, he has renovated and glorified all that others had revealed before him. He has added tenderness and loveliness to all that else was stern and terrible. He has shed the bright love of *the Father* to gild with entrancing light and beauty all

other relations which God bears to man, so that, henceforth, to those who learn of Jesus, all God's attributes and perfections, and all the names derived from their operations, are seen invested and imbued with the tender glory and blessedness of the Father—the Father's *Love*. *That* is the light, through which, henceforth and for ever, we are to behold the Creator, the Lawgiver and the Judge of mankind.

And lest mere *words* of doctrine and of precept might not fully or rightly impress our minds and hearts with a sense of this most perfect and complete idea of God, Jesus has illustrated, exemplified and embodied the love of God for us as our Father, in his life, as well as in his teachings—in his spirit, as in his words. He thus becomes to us "the Word of God"—Christianity the only true, full, perfect revelation of God, *the Father*—and Christ the embodied, living Christianity—who may affirm as a literal fact, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Let us, therefore, consider more distinctly the meaning of his words.

I. Christ is the *Way* to the Father. His example in obedience to every obligation and duty, will lead us, not only to a theoretical but also to an experimental knowledge of God as our Father. Jesus rendered no merely servile obedience. He submitted himself to God's disposal *as a son* having full confidence in his Father's wisdom and goodness, even where *the reasons* of God's ordinations seem not to have been fully revealed to his understanding. "Even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in Thy

sight," was the language of his life in the darkest seasons of trial and sorrow. Groaning under the burden-shadow of approaching betrayal and desertion; and sweating "as it were great drops of blood" in the agonizing view of death by the cross; while the flesh cried out in weakness, "save me from this hour!" the spirit bravely and trustingly recognized a *Father's* will, and responded, "but for this cause came I into the world," and all was filial submission and heavenly peace.

He suffered *as a son.* All through the eventful years of his earthly mission, he felt that the Father's will must always embrace the child's welfare, and the final glory be consummated by the offspring's perfect holiness and bliss.

He obeyed *as a son.* Not because of the Father's might to punish disobedience, nor for any sordid expectation of exclusive reward; but, because he *loved* the Father, and recognized in the requisition of command the Father's love for His offspring, was he obedient even unto the death of the cross. He knew that the exaltation to the right hand of the Father which would follow that deep and painful humiliation, would enable him to do the Father's will in drawing all men unto him, thereby reconciling the world unto God.

And he worshipped and adored *as a son.* No name so dear to his lips, so near his heart, so constantly in his thoughts, as "the Father." From Him he received all his powers—by Him he was constantly guided and supplied—for Him he wrought all his labors—and to Him he ascribed all praise and glory. The Father was not only near to him, but he "dwelt

in the bosom of the Father"—in His confidence and in His love—so that he and the Father were one in mind, purpose and working.

Now, to imitate the Saviour—to copy his life—is to be truly a "son of God," by filial trust, by spiritual communion, by resemblance of character; and, consequently, to experience God's parental love. Loving God, it is his meat and his drink to do God's will. And doing God's will, he *knows* of the doctrine of Christ that it is of God—that God is really and truly his Father. And thus to come unto God through Jesus, is to find that Jesus is the Way, and that no one can truly come unto the Father but by him.

Out of Jesus, there must be uncertainty and wandering. Nature is an uncertain guide to duty. The desires and passions are more prompt than reason, and more clamorous in their demands. Conscience is so modified by miseducation or clouded by ignorance, as to be frequently unreliable. And the revelations of God's character and attributes furnished by nature and providence, require light from above to render their teachings clear to the soul and constitute them a perfect guide to the knowledge of our Father's will and purpose respecting us. The Law, though a revelation from above, "being only a shadow of good things to come, cannot make the comers thereunto perfect" in *love*, and consequently cannot teach them obedience *as children*. And even the prophets, who beheld the coming of "the latter day glory," still dwelt within the shadows of the Law, and therefore addressed men as servants, and not as friends—as "children yet under tutors and governors," and not as offspring of mature years, fully instructed in the

Father's wisdom and grace. Hence, out of Jesus, the only perfect Way to the Father, there must be uncertainty, and error, and wandering; for no one cometh to the Father save by him.

II. Jesus is not only the Way, but he is also the *Truth*.

Other teachers of divine truth had only glimpses and partial revelations of God. They saw Him as the one, only Supreme—as "the Governor among the nations" and the Sovereign of the Universe—and as bearing a special tender relation to the destitute and the oppressed; but they seem not to have beheld the higher and greater glories of His paternal feelings toward "the family of heaven and earth," and His specially merciful and forgiving love to sinners. But the revelation to Jesus embraced not only *more*, but a more *intimate* knowledge. Moses had beheld only the glory of God's goodness: Jesus intimately knew and exhibited the glory of his loving-kindness *as a Father*. He "*dwelt* in the *bosom* of the Father." He knew "the *fulness* of His grace and truth," and so represented them in his own person, that he not only *taught*, but *was* this Truth. He was the co-worker and the representative of the Father, in the manifestation of parental love to sinful man, as well as the Father's agent. And every principle which he thus knew to be inherent in the infinite Father, he taught as doctrine for human faith, and *lived* in his own life for human trust and reliance. Hence, he who saw Jesus, saw the Father—in his words, heard the Father speaking—in his deeds, saw the Father working—in his life and death and resurrection, saw

the Father loving and forgiving and redeeming. He, then, who receives Jesus in full trust and confidence —who realizes and actualizes Christ's life so as to make it his own, comes to the Father in truth and in deed. He rests in, and lives by, the relation thus made known to the soul of man concerning God.

Christ, then, is *the* Truth—and all knowledge obtained concerning God, aside from the Son of God, is defective or erroneous in the highest and most important revelation of Deity. For it lacks the great truth of His relationship to us, and His consequent regard for us—the saving, comforting, impelling and sustaining truth, that *as a Father* He has created, *as a Father* He has blessed, *as a Father* He punishes, and *as a Father* He will redeem us. This is the *essential* Christian faith, which changes the character of all things and events in our estimation, and brings with it "the spirit of adoption" by which we, too, are changed from foreigners, and aliens, and enemies, into fellow-citizens, and joint-heirs, and veritable children of the living God, with Jesus Christ himself, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

III. Yea, and Jesus is the Life, also—not merely the Way and the Truth, but *the Life*, and *their* Life.

Obediently, in outward moving, we may walk in the way of God's commandments; and yet each step be taken listlessly, if not reluctantly, and all our works be dead. We may believe each word of doctrine with the whole mind; each mental power grasping it with the clearness, precision and firmness with which it apprehends a philosophical axiom, or a mathematical problem. And yet, while we thus

believe, we may tremble in ill-suppressed fear; for it is with *the heart* only that man believes unto salvation—with *perfect love* only dwells the faith whose confidence is above all distrust. There may, then, be both a believing and a working, which are *dead*—lacking life—and therefore not bringing us unto the Father, who is the Fountain of Life, the Self-existing Existence. But Jesus is "the Way, and the Truth, and the *Life*"—and whoso receiveth him receiveth the Father also, and worketh and believeth not in vain.

The indwelling life of Christianity—what is it, that we may embrace and possess it? Love—"love to God supremely, and to man universally." Love is the bond of its perfectness. Its law is the law of love. Its new birth is being "born of love."

And this is most eminently manifested in its living embodiment, Christ himself. His entire spirit was love—love, not only to the great, the glorious and the good; but to the lowliest, the meanest, the vilest of our race. If there was *any* speciality in the love of God, as illustrated and represented by him, it was for the sinner rather than for the righteous; for he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; and, like the angels in heaven, he rejoiced more over one sinner saved, than over ninety and nine persons who needed no salvation. Love, then, was and is the spirit of Christ's Gospel and of Christ's life.

And the nature and essence of the Father, whose Image and the Brightness of whose Glory he is, is the same—for "God is Love." This is the Life which was in Christ, and by which alone we can come unto the Father. "Herein is love, not that we

loved God, but that *He* loved *us*." And "we love Him, because He first loved us." Our love or life is derived; but His is underived, original. Ours is induced or excited by His; but His is spontaneous, uncaused, unpurchased, and impartial.

Now, the mind of man may misconceive truth, and the powers of obedience may fail; but the soul of man, when born of love, can never fail to be conscious of its life, or misunderstand the Original whose image it bears. Let the spirit of Jesus, then, be the expounder of his words, the interpreter of his life, and you cannot fail to understand the Father, revealed for the faith and love of mankind. Dark events of providence may cast their shadows over your life, and nature may be blind, and deaf, and dumb to your queries and your doubts, but above them all will your way be held, and your truth cast its light, giving the life of a Father's love to your soul. Dark and threatening terrors may seem to issue from the Law, and perversions of the Gospel may be arrayed against your prayers and your hopes; but brought into the clear light of God's infinite parental love, all will be life, and not death.

Make, then, the spirit of Jesus the life of your soul, and you will come to the Father, and dwell in the everlasting light of his countenance, wherein is no darkness at all. Be Jesus your life, and you will be at-one with God, even as Christ is one with the Father, and as all mankind will finally be one in God, and God all in all.

Jesus, then, is the life that shall animate all our faculties and powers, so that we shall be spiritually and practically the children of God, and living mem-

bers of the body of Christ. And thus we see how, out of Christ, or aside from his teachings, we cannot come unto the Father, nor have his real life dwelling in us. It is only as *our Father*, that we can fully and understandingly love Him — and without love, our faith is dead, and our service vain — without the knowledge and love of Him as our Father, the commendation of His love becomes a fearful sacrifice to placate His wrath, and to rob His vengeance of its hapless victims. There can be no life for the soul in a faith which makes the Son superior in love and mercy to his God, and which makes up in gratitude to the bleeding victim, for aversion to the infinite cruelty of the avenging Deity. Were such the Gospel of Jesus, we would come, not unto the Father, but to the Enemy, by him. In that way there could be no joy—in that truth, no atonement—in that life, no peace. A regeneration into the spirit of Jesus would be no conformity to God; for the former would be in opposition of character to the latter. But blessed be the revelation of the Gospel, which assures us that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself," and that "by Jesus we have access unto the Father;" for he is "the Brightness of the Father's glory, and the express Image of His person."

In conclusion we would note the fact, that our text involves a philosophical as well as spiritually experimental religion for man. All there is of practical and theoretical religion is embraced in coming unto the Father by Jesus as "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." There is the subjection of the *will* unto God, by a willing and perfect *obedience*, and a con-

formity of life to His image. Then we have, also, the subjection of the *mind* by *faith*, which is not a mere assent, but a firm conviction and confidence, controlling and directing all its faculties and powers. And lastly, we have the subjection of the *heart* by *love*, so perfect as to cast out all distrust, and doubt, and fear.

And all this is rationally effected by a *law*, appealing to the will for obedience; by a *principle* on which that law rests, apprehended by the understanding; and the whole animated by a *sentiment* which makes itself felt and obeyed by the heart or affections of man.

In this exhibition or manifestation, we have, in Jesus as the Way, the Law exhibited in the spirit of his life—revealed as Precept to guide us in his footsteps—and vitalized for us in the illustrations of his Example. In Jesus, as the Truth, we have the Principles existing in Deity, reduced to Doctrine for our understanding of them, and exemplified in the life of His Son for our Practice. In Jesus, as the Life, we have the motive of God's unpurchased Original love, producing in us love in return, and securing its living action in our bearing His spirit and doing His works.

Thus, then, let us receive Christ, as the living Word of Jehovah, "God manifest in the flesh," by whom only we have access unto the Father of our spirits. Thus let us walk in him as the Way, learn of him as the Truth, and have our life hid with him in God as the eternal Life. And thus receiving him, we shall find him to be, indeed, "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." And thus coming unto God by him, we shall trust, and love, and serve Him, not only as

our Father, but as the Father of the spirits of all flesh —"the Saviour of all men."

In such a frame of mind our experience will constantly translate the language of an apostle, in referring to the suffering and triumphant Redeemer: "Whom not having seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

LET US PRAY.

OUR FATHER, we bless Thee for the revelations of Thy creation and providence, and for the gift of Thy Son, and the manifestations of Thy grace and truth by him. May this commendation of Thy love make us unfeignedly penitent for all our sins, by inspiring greater love for Thee; and do Thou enable us to serve Thee more heartily, by imitating Thy goodness and mercy in our daily life.

Reclaim our wandering steps, O Lord, and direct us ever in Thy holy way. Disperse our errors by the light of Thy saving truth. Redeem us from all death by the quickening energy of Thy Spirit. And thus finally save *us*, and all mankind, with an everlasting salvation, through Thy well-beloved Son; and Thine shall be the praise for evermore. *Amen.*

GOD IN HISTORY.

BY REV. G. COLLINS. SCRIPTURE LESSON, ROMANS XI.

Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thy hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.—PSALM CXXXIX. 5, 6.

SUCH is the reverential and almost despairing exclamation of a distinguished Hebrew poet. He had observed the course of human affairs during a long and eventful career. He had looked on Life from the cot of a shepherd, and the throne of an empire, —as the youngest son of Jesse, and the greatest of Israel's kings,—as the descendent of an humble family, and the founder of a royal race: But, notwithstanding his great experience and profound wisdom, the government of the Most High was too mighty a theme for the grasp of his mind. He *felt* that God was among the nations, and in all the events of human existence, but he could not fathom the mysteries of Divine Providence. His hopes and fears are embodied in the Psalm from which our text is selected; and those who shall read his thoughts on this subject, must needs be led into profitable meditation.

It is not wonderful that David should encounter many difficulties when he turned his attention to the Divine government. Similar difficulties are always encountered by the earnest, sincere and devout. And

the solemn questions are continually arising in their minds, *Who is God?* Does He sustain the same relation to the material world, which the human spirit does to the human body?

We feel that we are controlled, if not by omnipotent, yet by unavoidable circumstances: that society, which imparts to us its manners and knowledge, which stimulates or depresses us by its hopes and fears, which deprives us of a portion of rights for our own and the common good—was organized without our consent. From whence has it originated? What secret and what obvious influences have made men what they are? and the world what it is?

We do not propose to answer questions like these. We only design to speak of *God in History.* We desire, if possible, to show that the minute, as well as the mightiest events, are subject to the Creator and Governor of all things. In doing this, we hope also to show that accidents never occur, and that trifles are unknown, in a world which was created and is governed by a wise God.

We have stated our position and object. Let us seek illustrations and proofs

Four thousand years ago, a young man emigrated from the banks of the Euphrates to what is now called Palestine. This, some would call a trifle, others an accident. No historian would degrade the dignity of his page by noticing such an insignificant affair, were it not for the mighty and almost universal consequences which have resulted from it. In a few ages, that young man became the father of a nation. To that nation was given the written law, vitalized

by remarkable prophecies. His posterity wandered in Palestine. They were reduced to slavery in Egypt. They escaped, returned and conquered Palestine, and for centuries flourished there. Nebuchadnezzar carried them to Babylon. Cyrus permitted them to return to the home of their fathers; and finally the Romans scattered them among the nations.

In the times of their prosperity, prophets were sent to them, and among them Christ appeared. Their religion, expanded and refined, is now the religion of the civilized world. The writings of their poets, philosophers and prophets, are among the sacred books of Christendom.

Hence, we say, the emigration of Abraham to Palestine is intimately connected with the happiness and dearest interests of the race—with our civil freedom, domestic comfort, and religious hopes. A chord was touched in distant ages, and the vibrations have not ceased at the present moment.

And another fact, which we will mention, is equally wonderful. More than twenty-five hundred years after Abraham died, one of his descendents, a poor and unknown man, travelled with his camels and merchandize through Assyria, Arabia and Palestine. In a few years, he affirmed that God had commissioned him to regenerate the world. He soon founded an empire. His brethren, the untamed posterity of Abraham's son, Ishmael, flocked to his standard and received his faith. He became a prophet, priest and king. After his decease, his invincible followers carried the Koran into distant lands, until half of Africa and as much of Asia, renouncing their idols and the grosser forms of Paganism, accepted Mahomet

as the prophet of the Most High. The wave submerged Paganism, but dashed in vain against the bulwarks of Christianity.

Thus, in consequence of Abraham's removal from the burning plains of Mesopotamia, a true religion has been given to Europe and America, and one not entirely false to many millions in Africa, Asia, and the Indian Isles.

In events of this character we see neither accidents nor trifles, but the wise designs of an eternal God—a vastness of wisdom which, though incomprehensible, is not on that account unintelligible.

Again: To Abraham's keeping were committed promises of momentous importance and far-reaching significance—promises which could not be fulfilled until generations and centuries had passed, and yet on the preservation and fulfilment of which depended the happiness, progress and civilization of the world.

Now, for their preservation even man, in his ignorance and blindness, would say that something more was necessary than his own treacherous memory. This want was met by the invention of the alphabet, and the discovery of the art of writing. Before Jacob and his family removed to Egypt, Cadmus went from that land with those sixteen *signs* which seem to be the foundation of all learning, preserving the past and bringing the distant near. And when Moses was educated in Pharaoh's court, and instructed in the sublime mysteries of Egyptian mythology, the most important knowledge he received was a knowledge of reading and writing.

Had he not been thus taught, the Law, which was only designed to shadow forth the Gospel, would

never have been written, and must soon have faded from the memory of man. Had the Law been forgotten, the Jews would never have become a distinct people. Had not the Jews been separated from all other tribes by impassable civil and religious barriers, a whole nation would not have expected a Messiah; and as no preparation had been made, the "fulness of time" would not have come, for "God to send His Son into the world." Thus may we readily perceive the influence which the alphabet has had in the introduction of the Gospel.

But let us not pause to moralize. Rather let us glance at another fact illustrative of the general theme, and bearing on this particular topic.

Six or seven centuries before Christ appeared, two young men were driven from their home on the banks of the Tiber. Love for the place of their birth forced them to return; a desire to revenge their injuries, unsheathed their swords; stern necessity made them robbers; prudence bade them build a castle; that castle, situated on the top of a rock, was the foundation of imperial Rome! Those brothers offered an asylum to such as were in distress, protection to fugitives from justice, freedom to slaves, and consequently the city rapidly increased in size and power.

The aggressive violence of the Romans roused the neighboring tribes, but in the ensuing conflicts the former were victorious. In a few centuries all Italy was reduced to subjection, and from an unorganized robber-band, the Romans came forth a disciplined, persevering, law-obeying and tolerant nation. Wherever they went, they abolished the more glaring

abuses, and established many wholesome laws, but never meddled with the religious customs or opinions of the conquered nations.

When Christ was born, the empire was in the height of its power. It extended from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, from Arabia to the British Islands. The language of the rulers was spoken and their laws enforced in every part of the empire. This power and catholic tolerance of Rome, differing from every nation of antiquity, seemed indispensable to the successful introduction of Christianity. Christ could preach, and the Roman power restrained the Jews from molesting him. They could mob and annoy him, but had no legal power over his life. The fickle multitude could persecute, but Cæsar permitted the Master and his disciples to travel without passports, and to preach without license.

With a knowledge of these mighty results, and only a few have been mentioned, dare we call the settlement of those two robber-brothers on the banks of the Tiber, a trifling affair, an accidental occurence? Does it not rather appear as a link in that great chain of cause and effect, one end of which is held by the hand of God, and the other, after passing through all time and around the race, is fastened to His throne?

Again: At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the inhabitants of Europe were nearly all Romanists. Darkness covered the face of the earth. The Church had the power and the monastery the learning. Books, not printed, but written, could with the utmost difficulty be obtained. Few years

later, the human mind awoke to a sense of its wants. The cry was for books. But the labor and cost necessary to supply the demand, placed them beyond the reach of all except the wealthiest.

About this time, a young man by the name of Guttenberg, having participated in a riot, was obliged to fly from his native city. *He* invented printing, and the time of this invention, late as it is in human history, was the epoch of light.

But printing, though a gift from Heaven, could do little good under the iron rule of Papal ignorance, military despotism, and feudal law. The tiara of the Pope must be soiled, the sceptre of the monarch shivered, and the spear of the soldier blunted. But through what instrumentality shall the Ruler of events accomplish this might work? We will tell you: That which was hidden from kings and princes, from the wise and the learned, was revealed to babes.

In the year 1505, a young man, little more than twenty years of age, was walking with a friend. His father was a poor man, and the lad himself had often begged in the streets. Suddenly his friend dropped dead. So great was the influence which this circumstance had over him, that, in opposition to the wishes of his father, he resolved to become a monk.

When Martin Luther (for of him we speak) entered the convent, he was poor and unknown; but God had chosen him to reform the religious world. And the main support of that reform, was the printing-press of Guttenberg.

The liberty of the press, however, and of religious opinions, could not flourish in enslaved yet aristocratic Europe. The kings of the earth and the

priests of Belial were united against the Lord and against His Anointed. It became necessary to have a continent which had not been parceled into estates, and was not cursed by favored classes, for the full exercise of that civil and religious liberty which Protestantism affirms are among the natural rights of every man. And a new continent was discovered, which now, by the blessing of a Wise Providence, is the land of the free.

But who should make this discovery? Who should be employed to bring this great blessing to the world? For ages, men had looked out upon the Atlantic, and strained their eyes in vain attempts to pierce its mists, but no one had ventured to explore its mysterious and dread expanse. At length, God sent a poor sailor to accomplish that which kings with all their power, and priests with all their zeal, dared not attempt.

Thus Guttenberg invented printing; Luther proclaimed religious liberty; and Columbus discovered a world where books could be read without the interference of the police, and where religious liberty could be enjoyed without the interference of priests.

Nor should we forget that two of these men, Luther and Columbus, felt in their souls the divinity and importance of their mission. They worked, for they were compelled to work. In his castle-prison Luther began to translate the Bible; and when the very powers of nature seemed to combine against Columbus, when in mid-ocean, where man had never been, and with a mutinous crew, the needle of his compass, his only hope, his only guide, swerved from its natural position,—then, instead of faltering, the language of

his heart was, "God has sent me, I must not turn back!" O, when the times call for an actor, he comes, and the right one too.

We may not be able to trace every link in this great chain of cause and effect, but judging by what we know, we can easily conclude that an unbroken chain does extend from the creation of man to the end of time.

Had Luther lived at an earlier date, his voice could not have been heard amid the ringing shouts of barbarous warriors, or he himself might have seized a pilgrim's staff, and joined a crusading host.

Had this continent been discovered a few centuries sooner, feudal barons and monkish bigotry would have planted here the serfdom of the old world. Had not Guttenberg invented the printing-press, the labors of Luther had been in vain, and the discoveries of Columbus impossible. Had not the agents been wisely chosen, if we may so speak, a failure would have been the result.

But let us briefly mention a few more apparently insignificant events. Oliver Cromwell once wished to emigrate to this country, but Charles I. forbade. The immediate results were these: The King lost his head: the charm of royalty was broken: England became free: Episcopal power was shaken: Puritanism received an impetus which the unprincipled Charles II. could not destroy, nor the bigotry of his brother James control.

Some young men of Paris, in a drunken frolic, mutilated the statue of the Virgin Mary. One of them was executed. His death roused the infidel

hosts, who, with Voltaire as a leader, attacked with conquering power the religious abuses of the age. *They* opened the terrible tragedy of the French Revolution.

Washington once resolved to become a sailor. His mother would not consent to part with her son. The consequences were these: He became Commander-in-Chief of the Continental armies, and the first President of the United States.

Napoleon, when a youth, asked permission to enter the service of the Sultan. The Directory, then the supreme power in France, ungraciously refused to grant his request. In a few years he abolished the Directory, and soon became the Emperor of France and the conqueror of Europe.

Louis Phillipe was driven from France. His daughter-in-law, the amiable and beautiful Duchess of Orleans, wished to become Regent, and thus secure the crown for her son. "It is too late," cried a single and unknown voice. These few words shook Europe to its centre.

Before we close, we will direct attention to an event in our denominational history.

Towards the close of the last century, a lone stranger, a melancholy man, appeared on the shores of New Jersey. He could not boast of learning or great talent, of wealth or fame; but he carried precious seed with him, and, unknown to himself, was destined, by Him to whom the wisdom of this world is foolishness, to become instrumental in effecting a religious revolution from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the great Lakes to the greater Gulf.

That man was John Murray, the first acknowledged preacher of Universal Salvation on this continent. Had he appeared a few years earlier, the public mind would not have been prepared, by the stormy scene, which preceded our separation from England, to listen with any degree of patience or favor to his voice, and amid the frowns of Calvinism and scoffs of Infidelity, his labors would have been in vain. Had his coming been delayed, we believe the owner of the vineyard would have employed another laborer. The fulness of time had arrived, and God sent Murray.

The unfathomable love and wisdom of Deity not only sent the messenger, but also prepared the way. Potter, moved by a mysterious inspiration, had built a church, which, like the Athenian altar, was dedicated to The Unknown God. By a Providence equally as mysterious, a copy of "Relly's Union" had found its way to Gloucester, Mass. Potter welcomed Murray as his long-wished-for preacher; and a band of believers in Gloucester, said, "Be this thy home."

At first, Murray spoke in feeble tones and with a stammering tongue; but soon his voice gained strength and his utterance became eloquent. He went to and fro, protesting against error, defending the truth, describing the character of the Father, and proving the ultimate salvation of the race. Thousands listened to his words, and thousands believed. Others, mightier in logic and clearer in scriptural exposition, came to his aid. They were unlearned in this world's wisdom, but they were armed with the word of God, and their tread was the tread of giants. They leaned against the pillars of the partialist temple, and the building trembled to its foundation. The

adherents of Calvinism denied the decrees, and the barren tree of Infidelity began to wither. Pilate and Herod became friends, but Pilate and Herod could not stay the rising tide. Priests turned from the threatenings to the rewards. Poets ceased singing of Paradise Lost, and began to sing of Paradise Regained. The Legislature sought to reform rather than to punish, and the 'conflict of ages' will soon be settled by the triumphs of the Father's love, through the instrumentality of the ministry of Reconciliation.

In conclusion, permit me to mention one thought of a practical nature. We have shown that, under the government of God, accidents never occur, and trifles are unknown. The Father besets us behind and before, and lays His hand upon us. Human thoughts and actions, in their narrowest limits and widest extent, are subservient to the accomplishment of His designs. The beginning we know: the end is known only to Him who knoweth all things.

Now what we wish to say, is this: We have an unkind, an ungenerous thought respecting a friend. Before it is uttered, it is our slave; speak, and it becomes our master. With the swift-winged horse of fable we could not overtake it. With the strength of Hercules we could not bind it. The demon is beyond our control.

The same may be said of a true word, or good example. God converts them into angels of love, and they go forth as messengers of peace. In evil and in good, one man begins the song, but millions join the chorus.

We have therefore, as individuals, a fearful respon-

sibility resting upon us. Our slightest actions and lightest words may, in the endless circles of cause and effect, produce momentous results. Around us, for instance, are young hearts to be impressed and young minds to be influenced by our example. And each good word we may utter, even the approbative smile we bestow upon successful resistance to wrong, may be the pivot on which the moral and spiritual fortunes of the youthful hearer, or observer, will turn. The remembrance of it may fade from our mind, and perhaps sleep in his for years; but in some storm of passion, during some fierce assault of temptation, it may suddenly revive, and imparting vigorous strength to his better nature, bring him from the conflict victorious, though marked with cruel scars.

This is not a rhetorical flourish: it is in harmony with the philosophy of history and the laws of God. How many a wayward child has not only been restrained, but reformed also, by the remembrance of a mother's prayers? Perhaps the child brought down the gray hairs of that parent "with sorrow to the grave," but in the economy of the Divine Government no good thing is lost. The echoes of the mother's voice, coming from the cradle of infancy or the family altar, ceased not to smite the hardened heart, until it yielded to the power of maternal love.

How *our* pulses quicken with hope, and how strong we become to attack the hoary and fortified abuses of society, when we look into the distant past, and see the torch-light procession of moral heroes, marching through the darkness of the ages! In *their* generation, many of them were unknown. When they died, the crowd jeered and passed on. But now, from

prisons and scaffolds they speak to us in clarion tones, "Brothers, fight and toil. The day is dawning. A little one will soon become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. Fear not to turn your face to the smiter, and your cheek to those who pluck off the hair. Bear the cross of duty up the hill of suffering. You are co-workers with Infinite Beatitude. He besets you behind and before, and lays His hand upon you. Your tears will water the tree of truth. Your sighs will carry glad tidings to sorrowing hearts. Your blood will speak better things than the blood of Abel. Your labor will give ease, your bondage will give freedom, your death will give life to the world."

LET US PRAY.

OUR FATHER in Heaven: Thou art the Governor of the nations and the Ruler of events. Time and eternity are Thine. We bless Thee for the power, wisdom and goodness manifested in the history of our race, and desire to bow in grateful reverence before Thy throne, for Thou causest even the wrath of man to praise Thee. And while we see Thy ways among the nations, and hear Thy voice calling the hearts of Thy children unto Thee, O may we give heed to our thoughts that we sin not with our lips.

In seasons of peril, trial and darkness, may we look up to Thee, as the One to whom belongeth the issues of life and death. This petition we present in the name of him who, though rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might have the riches of eternal life. *Amen.*

SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT.

BY REV. SUMNER ELLIS. SCRIPTURE LESSON, I CORINTHIANS II.

——"They are spiritually discerned."—1 CORINTHIANS ii. 14.

THIS is affirmed of spiritual things; and it is my present purpose to unfold and enforce the practical truth, that we need to employ the intellect less, and the religious faculty more, in our search after the Christian apprehension and character.

From the earliest times, the tendency has been to render religion an intellectualism, a philosophy—a matter occupying mainly man's speculative talent, instead of something to be rather experimentally understood and enjoyed. Nor is it difficult to account for this, either in its origin or continuance. We may trace the starting of this tendency in the Christian Church during the first four centuries. The Platonists had found their way among the followers of Jesus, bringing with them their predilection to theorize; and they sought to engraft upon simple Christianity the uncomprehended and incomprehensible mysteries of Platonism. It was natural that discussions and divisions should be thus provoked, the intellect called into intense activity, the speculative talent put to the strain; and when once the current was turned in that direction, its force was accelerated by the momentum of sectarism.

From that time to this, the mental faculty, in the

sphere of religion, has been employed to the neglect of the spiritual; and the consequence is, that instead of knowing more of spiritual things, unspeakably less is known, and in many instances almost literally nothing.

The current of exercise must be reversed. The "wisdom of this world," vainly ambitious to comprehend all "knowledge and all mysteries," must be brought to nought, comparatively, and the human soul excited into supremacy—divinity comprehending divinity, spirit surveying spirit, as the normal method—before there can exist among men anything like an interior and real acquaintance with spiritual things.

No mere intellectuality, be it as that of Pythagoras or Plato, Bacon or Newton, can attain to such an acquaintance and its transcending joy. Such things are not seen and comprehended, in any vital sense, through logical processes so exclusively employed among the Philosophers, and extensively among Christians. The eye of the mind can only see in the direction of such interior realities, and discern that they *are*, or, from the nature of things, must be, and survey their outward relations. Its utmost vision falls short of inspiring a satisfying discernment, penetrating not at all beyond their outer circle.

There are, for example, almost numberless ways which the "schools" have adopted for proving the existence of a God; but when the patient, plodding student has passed through them all, he is not brought any nearer to God than is implied in the simple statement, "There *is* a God." He has not seen God—has not, as yet, caught a joy-giving, heart-

moving view of the ever-near Spirit. We may be told, in the most confident terms, that the evidences of design imply a Designer, that the creation implies a Creator, that the disclosure of laws implies a Law-giver, and much more of the same sort,—to all of which we may as confidently assent; but after all, the Being Himself is beyond the furthest limit of our investigation. The long way travelled has not brought us to see *Him* whose acquaintance we desire to make, whom we would behold as face to face.

So, again, we may be told that this Being is good, as all His works do show; that He is our Father, as our dependent condition in life implies. But while we may, from intellectual exercise, come to conclude and confess that this is so, the Father Himself, as a Spiritual Being, may be a stranger to us,—as one we have heard of and professed, but have not seen, have not enjoyed.

Such a statement, I fear, is too true of many, if not of the majority of professing Christians. Believing that He *is*, from an exercise of their reason, and proclaiming that belief, still do they need to say, with Philip, "Show us the Father." And we are not at all surprised to find them in such an unenviable posture, their hearts disappointed, their joy shallow and inconstant. They have been endeavoring, all the while, under the tuition of theorizers and speculatists, to discern God only intellectually—trying to catch a sight of the Infinite Presence, through an unnatural medium of vision.

God is a Spirit, and is to be "spiritually discerned." Let the intellect accept the proposition that there is a God, spiritual, paternal, (and this it does in ninety-

nine cases out of a hundred, from a very early period of life, as a piece of parental instruction,) and then comes in a work for the soul, to which it should at once be led.

It is just where this work, which work alone is hopeful, begins, that we have been too much inclined to leave off, our God still distant from us, His beauty of character, His loveliness of spirit, His pleasant friendship, at all times and everywhere a reality, as yet not beheld nor enjoyed. These things will appear to the soul's direct beholding. They are discerned when the spirit, in its own sphere, is quickened into vision by silent prayer and reflection.

It was not more true before Paul's day, that the "world by wisdom knew not God," than it has been since; not more true of the philosophizing Corinthians, or the speculating Athenians, than of you, and me, and all. It is for ever and everywhere the fact. "A little wisdom," says Lord Bacon, "leads one to Atheism; but much wisdom leads him back to God." Back *to* God, but no more: Back to a discovery and acknowledgment of His existence, but no further. The spirit only, directed by, but advancing beyond mere wisdom, can enter within the outer circle, and find and enjoy the personal presence of Him who "inhabiteth eternity." By direct communion, spirit with spirit, is the Father to be known; and hence, paradoxical as it may seem, and not complimentary to intellect, it is nevertheless true, that the Supreme Spirit is less vitally known and enjoyed by the merely wise, the professional critics, the learned defenders of five or fifty points of divinity, than by the simply, practically religious. Many of the latter

may have read through no treatise of evidences, or book of proofs; but believing that God *is*, and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him, they have followed the pointing of this belief, and have found the Father near by, and have felt *His* spirit bearing witness with *their* spirits, that they are His children.

Who so clearly saw, so profoundly understood, so really enjoyed the Father, among all that have gone before, as Christ and his trustful disciples? Yet intellect was not the medium through which they looked. Their mental culture was only that which was usual among the common people, the laboring classes, the carpenters, the tent-makers, and the fishermen. Is not this circumstance a rebuke of those who complicate theology, and who, seeking God only through labyrinthine courses of argument and theory, would lead others by the same dubious ways? The toil only brings vexation of spirit.

Bear in mind that I am not disparaging any, even the highest degree of mental training. There will ever be need of education, for various purposes —of pre-eminent education for many spheres and occupations of life. Knowledge is pleasant in itself, and useful withal. But when we attempt to substitute it solely for the spiritual intuition, and seek the Father through *it*, rather than with the soul, we commit a most serious mistake, a mistake already most extensively and injuriously entered into by the religionists of the world.

To the man in whom the spiritual faculty is brought out by meditation and prayer, and who is made to see and commune with the ever-listening

and infinite Soul of the Universe, He "does not appear simply as a First Cause, as merely Original Creator, back, out of the present, but as the perpetual Sustainer and Renewer of all thing, 'whose works are beautiful now as at the first.' God is near him, nay, with him; breathes upon him in the freshness of the morning; folds him tenderly in the shades of night; whispers to him in the awed stillness and aspirations of his heart," and becomes his companion by the way, alike in the crowd and the solitude. O how deeply do we need thus spiritually to discern Him! And how easily may we do so, if we will but adopt this normal method, and pursue it for a little time!

The doctrine of the text, which we have now illustrated with reference to our Heavenly Father, may be applied to all spiritual things. The answer to prayer, for instance, is always spiritual—that is, if it be spiritual prayer—and sometimes, in addition, the answer may be outward and material. He who shall make only an intellectual prayer, or shall read one from a liturgy, or repeat even the Lord's Prayer from memory—if he shall do it in the mental attitude in which the scholar recites an oration—will look only for the external, visible issue. He will be skeptical about anything like spiritual results,—and, indeed, well he may be, for in *his* case there will be none. His soul has made no prayer, but only his intellect; and hence, in his coldness and deadness of spirit, he is not prepared to discern and realize any answer.

Or, allowing that, from the nature of things, and from the testimony of others in whom he reposes confidence, he comes to believe that there are spiritual

influences and enjoyments induced by prayer—and that with the intellect, and not the soul, he asks for them—yet shall those spiritual influences and enjoyments be as unreal to him as before.

Let one ask, in the most expressive and appropriate terms which the intellect can invent, to behold and enjoy the outward, material light, yet having his physical eye closed or blind-folded, and consequently the divinely-appointed faculty for seeing the brightness of the day inoperative,—and of what avail will be his mental entreaties? Or, let one having but a poor inner eye for appreciating beauty in art, or even a superior eye unopened and unqualified by reason of disuse, seek intellectually to discern and enjoy the charms so profuse and inspiring in some transcendant picture,—and how illy would he succeed! He would have no internal affinity with the genius of such a production of art, and so no transport in viewing it.

Or, let one whose mind is rigidly logical, or wholly mathematical, or exclusively what we call a matter-of-fact mind, read a sublime poem, and it would be to him as uninteresting as a dead language or a sealed book,—for the beauty of poetry is not otherwise discerned than by the poetical gift. Nor, making application of the law here disclosed, can any one, except the spirit be exercised, the soul enlivened into vision, discern and enjoy the invisible phenomena of prayer—the mingling of spirits, infinite and finite—the inborn sense of peace, gratitude, companionship, and security.

No one can be more sensible of the truth of this view of the matter than the Preacher. His public prayers must sometimes be intellectual productions,

framed in the region of thought, rather than born out of such an inspiration of the soul as makes them spontaneous. His spiritual mood is not always what he would have it, when prayer *must* be made. With less or greater frequency, but never except to his discomfort, he must pray as out of the mind instead of the soul. And well does he know, by an unpleasant experience, that spiritual things are not mentally discerned and enjoyed, but spiritually. He *speaks* of divine things, and in befitting terms, but does not see nor feel them, as when the divine vision has been unclouded and direct.

No one, I apprehend, can be unacquainted with similar contrasts of experience. Worship is not always one and the same thing to *you*. This may be accounted for partly, perhaps, on the ground of the preacher's differences of spiritual fervor at different times—of his being more or less quickened within himself, and accordingly more or less quickening and inspiring with respect to you. But I cannot accept *this*—neither, I think, can *you*—as the only explanation. Your souls, also, are not always risen into the Mount of Vision—not always *ready* to rise there even—not always conscious of the secret attractions toward the sphere of spirit, nor drawn by them into sweet union with the eternal and beautiful. Hence, devotion languishes—the divine flame burns low.

I pass, in conclusion, to present this view with reference to the soul's immortality. Many proofs of this destiny may be addressed to the reason, many evidences and arguments. And we would by no means under-estimate their importance, nor dis-

courage the frequent contemplation of them for the purpose of mental fortification. They constitute one source or ground of reliance, that all shall be well; and are not to be ignored, but employed. Even upon less convincing conditions than logical arguments, has many a one confidently stood, and from thence departed, trusting in a better future. How many, with souls undeveloped by previous religious culture, have, in the prospect of near dissolution, cast themselves, as it were, on a single text of Scripture, and held to that as the source of hope! How many more have thrown themselves for security upon the mere outward, official service of a priest or clergyman, performed in the last hour of life! "The man who has spent his life without God in the world, will yet close it with some feeling of protection, if he has partaken of the sacrament on his dying bed. The most worldly deem there is some security in avowing an attachment to the Bible" in the season of life's setting sun; and an official, instead of spiritual Christianity, has tended to increase the number whose hopes repose in rites and rituals,—who, living to the world while in the world, seek fortitude for leaving it from some special expedient.

But than either or all of these conditions of reliance, there is one unspeakably better: one which, in begetting a sense of the soul's immortality, and of its infinite value, transcends all syllogisms, separate or collective texts of Scripture, and official ceremonies. That better hope is in the enduring substance of "spiritual things, spiritually discerned." It comes of personal acquaintance with the Being to whom we can look up, and feelingly, devoutly say, Abba,

Father. Its root is in the religious element; its growth is in a daily religious experience; and its blessing is in the spiritual nature, led to feel its oneness with God. Such an one feels the continued nearness of those who "are not lost, but gone before," and may joyfully and truly adopt the language of Paul: "We *know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Until we obtain this living trust, we have not the best preparation either for life or death. We shall not the most unconcernedly hold the one, nor meet the other, until, instead of depending upon processes of logic, or remembered passages of Holy Writ, or ceremonial expedients, we can trust to our spiritual apprehension of God, our soul-seeing of Him, and cast ourselves into His arms with the confidence of children. We must ascend into this summit of vision, or we shall not have triumphed over our doubts. Our out-look must be from the spiritual rather than the intellectual stand-point: From the former we see as "face to face," but from the latter as "through a glass darkly."

* LET US PRAY.

GOD OF TRUTH, let Thy blessing for ever rest upon us, in the assurance of Thy perpetual presence. Thou goest by, and we see Thee not: Thou passest on also, and we perceive Thee not: yet art Thou very nigh to every one of us. The darkness hideth not from *Thee*, but the night shineth as the day, and all things are open unto Him with whom we have to do.

Make us sensible, we beseech Thee, that Thy glory is in the goodness Thou art ever making to pass before us; and may our sense of Thy loving kindness, and our trust in Thine overruling purpose, constrain us to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before Thee.

And at last, when the shadows of the long night shall have fallen on our path, may our souls dwell together in the blessed land, where there is no forgetfulness of Thy presence, neither any more death. And to Thy holy name, thro' the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, shall be everlasting praise. *Amen.*

UNIVERSAL VICTORY.

BY REV. THOS. J. SAWYER, D. D. SCRIPTURE LESSON, PSALM XXIII.

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the Governor among the nations. PSALMS xxii. 27, 28.

IT is a remarkable fact that while the religion of the ancient Hebrews was national and local, it still involved elements of the most striking universality. The Institutes of Moses were intended for the children of Israel alone. To them alone were committed the oracles of God. Theirs was the Sanctuary and the Sabbath, and theirs too, in a manner, were the promises and hopes of that economy.

In many things the descendants of Abraham were exclusive, and shut out from their affections and sympathies those who did not belong to their nation. They were proud, and often supercilious, and in later times they came to look upon the Gentiles as outcasts and reprobate, and as unworthy of their love or kindness.

Yet there were in their religion some truths, fundamental in character, that should have taught them better lessons and inspired a more charitable temper and conduct. They were clearly instructed in the sublime fact that there is one, and but one God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and all things therein. They were taught that the whole human race sprang

from one primitive pair, who were made in the image of God, and consequently that all are of *one blood*, and constitute essentially one family. In their earliest and latest conceptions, God was a Universal King: His empire stretched over all, and He was Governor among the nations.

True, they regarded Him as especially *their* God. They knew His name and put their trust in Him, and He had chosen them to be His people, had given them His law and required their service. But notwithstanding this, they never denied nor questioned that God was over all, blessed for ever. He had made all, He had fashioned their hearts alike, He considered all their works, and His moral government embraced all the children of Adam.

What then would be the natural effect of such a broad, clear recognition of these great truths of One God, the Maker of all, and of the common brotherhood of the whole human race? What but a large and generous charity, and an occasional if not a permanent hope that all must at last come to see what *they* saw, and rejoice in the same goodness that they so richly enjoyed?

Experience and observation teach us, however, that we are not at once to expect in practice all that the theory of revealed religion would seem to require. Christianity inculcates universal charity and goodwill. It teaches us to love our neighbor, and even our enemy, and to offer supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks for all men, even the worst; and yet I need not say how harsh, and bitter, and cruel, have been whole churches, and nations, and ages, of those who have professed to be the dis-

ciples of Jesus Christ. There are millions in Christendom to-day, who, whatever else they may have learned from their religion, have not learned the divine charities which it teaches, nor do they practice that benevolence which it so urgently requires.

Let us therefore not be unjust to the religion of Moses, and ascribe to it the narrowness and partiality that are so strikingly exhibited in the history of its professors. They greatly warped and perverted it, and rendered it more selfish and exclusive than either its letter or spirit could justify or even suggest.

In opposition, then, to all that was peculiar and narrow in the Mosaic Economy, there were certain forces always operating to counteract any exclusive and partial tendency. Those who received that religion could not fail to look out, occasionally at least, beyond themselves, and to recognize other nations, though now denied all the light and blessings which they themselves enjoyed, as still heirs of God, and in some sense joint-heirs with themselves in the divine promises and benevolence.

There was indeed running through their Holy Scriptures a golden thread of light and of hope, that ultimately all men would be brought into the full knowledge and enjoyment of God. The pious and inspired among them saw that their separation from the other nations of the earth was only a temporary separation, designed to subserve a certain purpose in the divine plan, and then to pass away. The Mosaic Economy never contemplated itself as an end. As the apostle speaks of it, "the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ;" and Christ shines forth everywhere in the Old Testament, as well

as in the New, as a universal blessing, a Universal Saviour.

It has been suggested by an eminent German divine, that Christ was the first who ever advanced the idea of a universal religion, but this is by no means the fact. The Old Testament presented this idea, and unfolded it long before the birth of Christ. The promise of a time when there should be but one worship, and when God's praise should fill the whole earth, is exhibited in various forms in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Of this fact our text is proof. It announces that "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him." And it assigns the reason for this, namely, "the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is Governor among the nations."

Nor does our text stand alone in this respect. There are many passages, both in the devotional and the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, which teach the same doctrine and inspire the same hopes. "O thou that hearest prayer," says the Psalmist, "unto Thee shall all flesh come. . . . Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth: O sing praises unto our God. . . . God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him. . . . O let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for Thou shalt judge the people righteously and govern the nations upon earth. . . . O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before Him all the earth. Say among the heathen, the Lord reigneth; the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: He shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the

earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: For He cometh, for He cometh to judge [that is, *to rule, to govern*] the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with His truth."

"The publication of the Gospel is here represented," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "as a universal blessing; the *heavens*, the *earth*, the *sea* and its *inhabitants*, the *field*, the *grass*, and the *trees* of the *wood*, are all called to rejoice at this glorious event."

Nor is this thought confined to the devotional parts of the Bible. It also runs through the prophecies. The original promise made to Abraham, and repeated to Isaac and Jacob, that in them and their seed, (which the apostle says is Christ,) all the nations and families of the earth shall be blessed, clearly wears this universal aspect. There is nothing narrow nor limited in it. It is as broad as the human race. It is the Gospel which, St. Paul says, was preached to Abraham. And it is interesting to observe that inspiration has employed every form of expression possible, as if on purpose to hush every doubt and banish every fear of limitation. What in one passage is called *all the nations*, is in another called *all the kindreds*, and in another *all the families*, and in another still, *all the tongues of the earth.*

And so David, in the last of his prayers, as it is called, represents Christ as the universal king, whose dominion extends from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth; before whom all kings shall fall down, and whom all nations shall serve, and call him blessed. It is no wonder that with such a

sublime view of the divine economy, the Psalmist should exclaim, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen."

I hardly need say, that whatever in the prophets relates to Christ and his kingdom, bears marks of the same universality. Two or three passages must suffice to establish this point. In Isaiah we read, "And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation to the end of the earth."

Again: "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. . . . He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law."

And again: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else: the word hath gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear; surely shall say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength."

So God by Malachi says, "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Thus in the Old Testament do we find the roots of the great doctrine of the New, that Christ is the head of every man, and that the head of Christ is God: that in the progress of the Gospel all nations shall at last be brought into the knowledge and the blessedness of the religion of the one living and true God.

How wonderfully do we see those ancient promises and prophecies going on to fulfilment! There is something sublime in the thought, that what was spoken in the ears of patriarchs and prophets, so many ages ago, is to-day seen standing sure, and gradually and certainly tending to its perfect accomplishment. Reflect, my brethren, on what it was that God promised! There was nothing greater, nothing that seemed more improbable, in the whole range of human thought. It implied the annihilation of all the multiplied idolatries in the world, and the ultimate union of all the nations of the earth in one pure, rational, divine religion.

And yet at that time, and for ages and ages afterward, the whole world was lying in heathenish darkness. All around them, the patriarchs and prophets saw little but the grossest ignorance and superstition. The world was filled with temples and altars consecrated to the worship of idols. But when the word of God came and spoke of better things to come, they gladly opened their hearts to receive it. Abraham, we are told, believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness, and he was called the Friend of God. The Gospel was preached to him, and he rejoiced to see Christ's day: He saw it, and was glad.

We see the same faith in the prophets and apostles.

They spoke and acted as if they knew Him who promised, and felt persuaded that what He had promised He was also able to perform. The greatness of the work, the difficulties that attended it, and consequently the improbability of its being accomplished, made no impression upon their hearts. God had said it, and that was enough to silence all doubts, and forbid all misgivings.

How wonderfully has the scene since changed! The grand result has, in a measure, been already attained. We see the work going forward. Under Christ, we behold the great spiritual temple rising. The knowledge of God is being diffused, and the empire of Christ becoming wider and wider, and more and more mighty, as generation after generation passes away. What in the days of the apostles were but points of light, scattered here and there like distant stars, have now grown to be a galaxy and blend their radiance and their glories together. What was then confined to remote cities, dotting the earth's surface, has now spread over vast countries. The religion of Jesus Christ, so long the theme of promise and prophecy, which eighteen centuries ago reckoned its professors by *scores*, now counts them by *hundreds of millions*. What was then limited to the city of Jerusalem, and almost to an "upper room" in one of its dwellings, has now spread over half the globe, and may almost be said to girdle the world. What was received into the hearts of fishermen and publicans along the shores of Gennesareth, is now held by the kings and nobles of the earth, and is cherished by the most intellectual and the most moral, and consequently the most civilized and powerful nations of the world. The cross,

which was then a token of the deepest disgrace, has now come to be a badge of honor and a symbol of salvation.

And there is this peculiar circumstance attending Christianity, that deserves your particular attention: The religion of Jesus is now the only active moral force in the world. There is no other religion that is doing more than merely holding its own. Most of them, like the Greek and Roman Paganism at the commencement of Christianity, are losing their power and dying out. A few centuries ago, the Mohammedan religion was young and full of a new vigor. It was aggressive—filled with the love of conquest and a thirst of power, and it spread almost with the rapidity of lightning. It embraced a few elements of truth; it had some literature and science, and professed a form of civilization, and it seemed as if it were destined to overrun the whole earth.

But the Mohammedan religion is seen to-day to be an ephemeral power. Its prestige is gone, and we all see that it is unfit to become the religion of a truly enlightened and progressive people.

The old religions of Asia, venerable as they may be deemed, and well adapted as they may seem to the condition of the millions over whom they reign, are utterly incapable of growth or change. They have no power to adapt themselves to a new state of things, to a higher civilization and a rational human progress.

Christianity, on the other hand, is fitted for man in every stage of development,—as a revealed religion, destined to become universal, *must* be. It is always in advance of him, is always beckoning him onward

and upward. He never attains to the ideal which it bears aloft before him. Every advance which man can make, will but reveal the higher requisitions of Christianity.

And this religion, which has already operated steadily and so effectively for eighteen hundred years, shows yet no tokens of old age or decay. Indeed there never was a time, perhaps, when its vigor was more manifest, or its progress more decisive, than in this very age. It shows itself in no haste, it is true, for it has all time before it, but it gives unmistakable signs that it is to accomplish its high mission and attain its destiny.

No one, I maintain, can read the history of this religion and the world in which it is acting, without yielding to the conviction that Christianity must continue to advance and triumph, till it has brought the whole human race into submission to its benign sway. Christ is yet to be universally acknowledged on earth as Lord of All.

But it may be well for us to consider a moment what it has to do, before it perfectly accomplishes its work. It is not enough merely to *Christianize* the world, as men are accustomed to speak of Christianizing. It is not enough to bring men and nations into such a state as merely to tolerate Christianity, or even to profess what is often made to pass under that hallowed name. Christendom, as it now exists, is wanting much that is highest and best in Christianity. Neither in its institutions nor its laws, neither in its thoughts nor its morals, neither in its temper nor life, is Christendom yet thoroughly Christian. The great principles of love to God and love to man, which our

blessed religion so eloquently inculcates, are as yet but little understood or practiced.

Christianity has therefore not merely to extend its outward and visible dominion till it has embraced the whole earth, but it must also become vital and potent in the hearts of the people; it must teach individuals and States, truth and righteousness; it must make all men just and good; it must inspire them with a pure morality and a heaven-born love.

I know there are many who entertain no faith in such a grand result. They seem to think that this world is given up hopelessly to infamy and sin. They regard evil as ingrained in human nature, and not to be eradicated by any moral means. Even the grace of God, and the mission and death of Christ, mighty as they are, can do nothing more than meliorate the condition of man!

But, without closing my eyes to the prevalence of evil, or being insensible of the magnitude of the work of removing it, I dare believe, without wavering, that God will yet fulfil His promise, and Christ shall "bring forth judgment unto victory." And while I would not judge another man's servant, I must confess that it seems to me the plain duty of every Christian to believe implicitly in the ultimate triumph of Gospel grace and truth, in the conquest of the whole world. Christ shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law. The religion of the Messiah is represented by leaven hid in meal, which cannot fail to operate till *the whole is leavened!*

But I stop not here. I not only insist that all the inhabitants of the earth shall finally come to worship

the Lord and to sing unto His name, but also that ultimately all rational, moral beings, every individual of the human race, whether living in the world or passed away from it, shall be brought to the knowledge of God and to the enjoyment of life everlasting.

We are never to forget that Christ was to be the Saviour of the world; that he tasted death for every man; and is alike the Lord of all, both of the dead and the living. He does not abandon those for whom he died. The cross and the sepulchre have not separated him from the objects of his love, nor hushed into silence the sympathies he cherished for those whose nature he took upon himself, and bore. Beyond the grave, he is the Saviour, as well as on this side of it. His office and power are not limited to this world, nor to any place or time. They sweep over the universe, and if need be, through all eternity.

I know this is not the doctrine of the Church that arrogates to itself the honor of 'orthodoxy.' Men teach that Christ's saving grace extends only to the grave: Beyond the coffin and the shroud, he has no power: The divine mercy, though it "endures for ever," cannot shine into the realms of death! Thus, "at one push," as Dr. Barrow once said, these Christians "throw down whole nations into the bottomless pit."

Alas, for those who died before Christ was born; and alas for those, too, who since his death have lived beyond the reach of his Gospel! They are lost for ever! If God loved them and Christ died for them, as the Bible plainly teaches, God loved and Christ died, *in vain!* So far as unnumbered millions of our race are concerned, it was a mere waste of affection

and sympathy and blood. Had the God who made them, *hated* them, and had Christ, whom by a strange misnomer the Scriptures call the *Saviour of the world*, never come, or never died for them, their condition could not have been worse!

Thank God, if this is the 'orthodoxy of the Church,' it is not the orthodoxy of the Bible. Men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, never spoke thus. The inspired word teaches a different and a more glorious lesson. There we learn that the seed of the woman is to bruise the serpent's head, and that in the seed of Abraham all the nations, kindreds and tongues of the earth are to be blessed. There we hear the Saviour himself saying "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." And finally, the Apostle teaches that Christ must reign till he has brought all souls in subjection to his spiritual sway, when he himself shall become subject to the Father, and thenceforth GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL.

* LET US PRAY.

WE beseech Thee, O Lord, to follow with Thy richest blessing the religious meditations of this hour. May Thy holy word sink deep into our minds, that our souls may take hold of it as the hope of everlasting life. May we feel its power, and be doers of its heavenly lessons, lest the living sense of Thy favor die away from our affections and our thoughts.

Grant us Thy continual grace, that we may walk as children of light and of the day, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; and of Thy great mercy preserve our going out, and our coming in, from this time forth, and for evermore. *Amen.*

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

BY REV. ABEL C. THOMAS. SCRIPTURE LESSON, JOHN XVII.

——A more excellent ministry.—HEBREWS viii. 6.

THE Law of Moses was designed as a merely temporary institution, preparatory to the introduction of a better. In this subordinate relation, it was pronounced a glorious ministration, but the testimony is subjoined, that it "had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." The light of the star of the Jewish church was merged in the splendor of the Sun of Righteousness.

It is not our intention, on this occasion, to present the Law and the Gospel in all the points of contrast. Nevertheless it may be useful to note, that the former is declared to have been a ministration of condemnation, and of the letter that killeth,—while the latter is mentioned as a ministration of righteousness, and of the spirit that giveth life. Sinai, with all its terrors, is the Scriptural symbol of the former: Zion, in the beauty of holiness, is the symbol of the latter. The Gospel is declared to be a better covenant than the Law, because established on better promises—for, whereas the Law was designed for the service of the house of Israel alone, and limited the hopes of happiness, even for *them*, to the present world,—the Gospel is adapted to the spiritual necessities of universal humanity, and directs the eye of faith and hope to the displays of Divine benevolence in a life which shall

never be dissolved. And hence our Saviour hath obtained a more excellent ministry than was committed to the tribe of Levi.

In assigning the reasons for disannulling the old dispensation, the apostle mentions "the weakness and unprofitableness thereof," and declares, that "if that first covenant had been faultless"—that is, had it been adapted to the circumstances and necessities of mankind universally—"then no place should have been sought for the second."

Our Saviour, in his conversation with the woman of Samaria, referred to the defects of all then existing institutions, when he testified that the period was approaching when not alone in the temple on Mt. Gerizzim, nor yet at Jerusalem, should acceptable homage be rendered to the Supreme Being. "God is a Spirit; and they who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." This is the essential character of the Christian covenant. It regards neither the place, nor the outward condition nor ceremonies of the worshipper, but simply requires the sincere adoration of the heart. And in this sentiment, with its adjuncts, consists the excellency of the ministry of our Saviour and Lord.

All this is everywhere conceded and insisted upon, by Christian people; and it is among our happiest thoughts, that the disciples of the Master, though divided and subdivided into many sects, are in cordial harmony in numerous details of religious faith.

It would seem, however, that a fact in the early history of the Church has been perpetuated, and that *now*, as *then*, there are perverters and perversions of the Gospel of Christ.

No one will question this statement, but every one will see the difficulty *outside* of his own creed and practice; and if all would exercise the charity that thinketh no evil, there might be calm discussion of the whole matter, without any breach in the bond of peace.

It will not be regarded singular should I claim the highest esteem and deepest love, in behalf of the Ministry of Universalism, as the noblest expression of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God: And it is my present purpose to illustrate and enforce the claim, by a few important considerations.

I. The ministry we have obtained is more excellent than any other, because it reveals the Supreme Being in the relation of Universal Father; and *in this peculiarity* are embraced the most exalted and exalting conceptions of the Divine character and government.

Of all the relations of God to man, there is no one so endearing, none so simple yet truly sublime, as that embraced in the touching invocation, "Our Father who art in Heaven." In this character is embodied every thing honorable to the Divinity, every thing consolatory to humanity. It is in fact the hallowing unction of all other relations subsisting between the Supreme Being and His rational offspring. In constituting Himself our Creator, He was prompted by the affection which, as a Father, He has uniformly displayed. As the Lawgiver of His creatures, He acted in conformity with the love, and manifested the wisdom, of a Father. In the character of Judge, He never loses sight of, and never will forget,

the emotions and dictates of a Father's love. And in the character of Saviour of all, He will at last consummate the purpose of Creator, the design of Lawgiver, the object of Judge, each originating and progressing in, and hallowed by, the infinite and everlasting love of the Father of spirits.

All the prominent errors of all the creeds fashioned in the wisdom of this world, are attributable to a denial of this cardinal principle—for were it admitted that God, in the several capacities of Creator, Lawgiver and Judge, has but acted and will continue to act in the endearing relation of Father of all, the imaginary doom of endless wo, with all its kindred abominations, would be exploded and abandoned for ever! Our ideas of the Spiritual Father are derived from the corresponding character in our earthly relations—and we know that no man who merits the sacred appellation of parent, ever adjudges his child to an unmerciful doom. It is only when the administrator of household laws is so lost in the whirlwind of passion as *to forget the relation of father and child*, that a cruel punishment is inflicted.

In vain are we referred to the case of Lucius Junius Brutus, who condemned his two sons to death and attended personally at their execution, for an infraction of the laws—thus doing that in the capacity of a Judge, from which as a Father his heart recoiled. Illustration is not argument. Besides: The heathen example, belonging to an age which can hardly be considered millennial, involves the objector in serious difficulty. Behold the gist of the intended argument: The Supreme Being voluntarily, and in full view of the consequences, obligated Himself to

do that as a Judge, which would require the extinction of His love as a Father! Who can imagine the pangs of the Roman's soul, in the awful conflict between his love as a parent and his legal duty as a Judge! Could millions have redeemed his sons, without compromising the majesty of the law, Brutus would have been spared the agony of that fearful antagonism!

And shall *we* allege that a self-imposed necessity has placed the Divine Being on a like torturing rack? I say *self-imposed necessity*—for, without controversy, the Creator understood the nature of man, and perceived the bearings and results of all possible causes; and if, as Lawgiver, He so disregarded the parental emotions as to ordain penalties which, as a Father, He cannot consistently inflict in the capacity of a Judge, He voluntarily involved Himself in a dilemma of the most appalling kind. And this, too, without any *necessity* operating in the premises—for it will not be pretended that an eternity of wo is a penalty *necessarily attached* to a law for the government of a moral agent. And therefore, *if so attached*, it was of choice, and not of necessity.

It is generally admitted that God desires the salvation of the whole race of man; and that, for the accomplishment of this desire, He has instituted the means of grace connected with the hope of glory. And when we inquire what obstacle there is in the way, we are certified that the law of God has been violated; that His word is pledged for the infliction of the penalty; and that, were it *not* inflicted, the Divine character would be dishonored in the presence of an assembled universe. Indeed! And would an

assembled universe behold nothing abhorrent in the institution of the law to which that penalty had been annexed? Nothing inglorious in the Lawgiver's lack of knowledge to foresee the difficulties of the case? Nothing humiliating in His inability so to arrange matters as to prevent the antagonism of Father and Judge?

Behold Darius at the mouth of the den of lions. "O Daniel, thy God, whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee." And he "went to his palace, and passed the night fasting." But why did not *the king himself* deliver the prophet of the Lord? Did he not *desire* such deliverance? Yea—he had "labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him." Was he deficient in authority and power? Nay—but alas for Darius, *he had made a law!* It was "the law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not." It was violated by one whom he loved. He had not foreseen the results of the decree, else it would not have been made. "He was sore displeased with himself," and fain would have reversed his edict—but the multitudes of his subjects looked on, and queried in their minds, Will the king dishonor the law?

Behold Herod in the banqueting-hall. In the excitement of the occasion, he promised with an oath to give the daughter of Herodias whatsoever she should desire, even unto the half of his kingdom—but when the head of John the Baptist was demanded, the countenance of the king waxed pale, and sorrow filled his heart. Shall he retract? He would be dishonored in the presence of his guests. Shall he fulfil his promise? His best feelings and noblest

sentiments would be outraged! *The king was sorry*—but the sentiment of false honor prevailed; and for his oath's sake, and to retain the good opinion of them who sat with him at meat, he commanded the head of the Baptist to be stricken off!

And has it come to this, that the excellent ministry of our blessed Lord reveals the Supreme Being involved in an infinitely more terrible difficulty than either of the foregoing? Reason, Revelation, Common Sense, unite in a negative reply.

The entire difficulty originates in the *popular denial* of the proposition, that God, as Creator, Lawgiver and Judge, never loses the relation, never acts counter to the affection of a Father. In creating mankind in His own image, He instituted a relationship which can never be dissolved. In instituting laws for the government of His universal family, He regarded only the happiness of His children, and decreed no penalties interdicted by parental love. And in the administration of those laws, He never has done, and never will do, aught in contravention of the affection of a Father, because all His judgments, however severe, are designed to issue in the holiness and blessedness of all His offspring.

II. We have obtained a more excellent ministry than any other, because, in our view of the Supreme Being, He possesses every amiable perfection, every desirable quality. Any modification of any of His attributes would mar the beauty of His character; any attribute wholly removed would impair His loveliness; any attribute superadded would deform Him.

Without intending to prefer a claim to extraordi-

nary sanctity, we remark that he who would properly behold God as He is, and thus form right conceptions of His nature and perfections, must be possessed of purity of heart. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." It can experience no sympathy with the spirit of holiness, for they possess no qualities in common. Its ideas of things desirable or lovely will be constituted in its own likeness; and being itself of the earth earthy, its images of desire and loveliness will be generated in the wisdom from beneath. It beholds no charms in the principle of diffusive charity—for it is selfish in the extreme. It is not subject to the law of God, which is the law of love, neither indeed *can* it be, for its constitutional bias is to evil, and only evil, continually—and hence the spirit of prophecy speaks, not of its purification, but of its utter destruction. Its language uniformly is, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?" And it declares concerning the Messiah, "He hath no form nor any beauty that we should regard him, nor is his countenance such that we should desire him."

Not, then, to the carnal mind—not to men who are under the controlling influence of depraved feelings—but to persons in whom the animal passions are subordinate to the mind of the spirit—to *these*, and not to *those*, is the character of God unveiled in all the sublimity of its glory. And in the precise ratio of approximation to perfect purity of heart, will there be sympathy between the judgment and feelings of men, and the nature and perfections of the Lord.

In order clearly to set forth the excellency of the ministry of Universalism, select, if you please, the most worthy member of any religious communion

whose doctrinal tenets are adverse to our distinguishing point of faith. The person thus selected will doubtless be regarded as a Christian in spirit, a man of truly pious feeling, baptized in the font of heavenly love. He has formed definite opinions of the attributes of the Supreme Being, and believes that while mercy claims for her own the penitent of our race, justice demands the irretrievable wo of a part or portion of mankind. Has he no desire that the attribute of justice might be so modified as to permit more extended displays of the mercy of God? His theory, indeed, embraces the abstract proposition, that the Judge of all the earth will do right, in all cases, because He is perfectly just. But can he particularize, and sincerely declare that there is perfect sympathy between his Christian feelings and the supposed demands of Divine justice? so perfect as to induce not merely the sincere desire, but the fervent prayer, that those demands may be rigidly regarded? Can he not conceive some desirable modification, provided such modification were consistent with the Divine will?

Among spiritually-minded persons there can be no diversity of opinion in relation to these interrogatories. *Unmerciful justice is the offspring of the carnal mind*, and is condemned by the wisdom from above.

It will perhaps be objected to the result of this argument, that there are multiform evils in the present world, the existence of which all good men sincerely deplore—and that, on the same principle, eternal evils may be heartily lamented by pious persons, without impairing the argument in proof of endless wo as the penalty of the law of God.

To this I reply, that the cases are not parallel

We readily perceive that temporary evils, however great, may be made subservient to the purposes of infinite benevolence, in relation to every individual sufferer; and believing that every evil *will* be thus overruled, devotional feeling may experience perfect sympathy with *the operative principle* of the Divine government, even though *many of its measures* are profoundly mysterious. But evil which is strictly eternal, must be regarded as an *end*, and not as *a means;* and it is impossible to conceive of individual benefit as the result of immortal pangs!

I ask no one to rejoice in all the ways and measures of Divine Providence, for many of them are dark and utterly inscrutable, and productive of much present suffering; but I ask every one so to conceive of the issue, the termination, as to desire no modification of the Divine attributes, no reversal of the purposes and doings of the Almighty. And I insist that there is not a truly Christian disciple under heaven, who would not modify that species of justice which demands interminable wretchedness, if he possessed the power. He would reverse the judgments of the Lord, so far as endless torment is concerned. He would enlarge the dominions of redemption; and, in quenching the ideal flames of inextinguishable fire, he would send up the shout of universal victory over sin and death!

But with *us*, the modification and reversal aforesaid are forbidden. We can conceive of no change for the better in any of the attributes of God, for they are the attributes of *a Father!* In love they originate—in love they operate—the signet of love is on all their sanctions, and the consummation to which they tend is love, and holiness, and blessedness for ever! Any

modification of any of His perfections would mar the beauty of His character—eradication of any quality of His nature would render Him less worthy our adoration—and any addition would but hide the light of His countenance, and darken the spiritual world with the shadow of deformity. We cannot imagine any desirable reversal of any of His judgments—for we behold the glorious result of all His plans, even the subordination of all things to the kingdom of His Anointed!

The ministry we have obtained is, therefore, more excellent than any other, because it reveals that view of the Divine character and economy which in feeling we can most cordially approve, and in judgment most devoutly admire.

III. The ministry we have obtained is more excellent than any other, because it presents the only means of effecting the practical purposes of the Christian institution.

The faithful and true witness has furnished a most luminous compendium of the whole duty of man: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matthew xxii. 37–40. We hence infer, that the required love will be produced in the heart and soul and mind of every individual by whom the Divine character is understood and appreciated; and since religion is a matter of hourly concern, we also infer that man may *here* attain to

such knowledge of the Lord, as practically to regard the injunctions of this heavenly law.

In proving the excellency of the ministry of Universalism, little farther is requisite than to show that the cardinal principles of every other ministry are self-destructive, and utterly subversive of the ends they are designed to accomplish. It is not to be denied that all Christian professors aim to produce universal love to God and man; but what means do many of them employ for the accomplishment of this object? The law they recommend, even the law of love, has the penalty of endless wo annexed; and hence, *by the use of their theory* they *never* succeeded, and never *can* succeed, in producing in *any* heart, unfeigned and perfect obedience to the first and great commandment! He who requires me to love any being on pain of his vindictive wrath, defeats the object he has in view, and renders obedience impossible. And were the Lord Himself to bow the heavens and appear in our midst; and were He to require this assembly, individually, to love Him with the whole heart, on pain of His eternal displeasure, there is not a soul in this congregation who would be able to comply! The affection of the heart is not a subject of compulsion. That which is appalling can never be adored: That which is amiable can never be abhorred.

To illustrate this argument, let it be supposed that a man held in general repute for benevolence of character should meet you on the high-way, having a deadly weapon in his hand. As he approaches, he commands you instantly to love him with all the powers of your mind, and to acknowledge in sincerity

that he is justly esteemed the worthiest citizen in this community; and then, as he elevates the weapon, let us suppose that he threatens you with immediate death, as the penalty of non-compliance with his commands. *Could* you obey? *Would* you? Yes, so far as mere words and outward demonstrations are concerned—but in the depths of your soul you would detest him, and the hypocrisy of your professions of affection and regard, would only be justified on the principle that "all that a man *hath*, he will give for his life." You would conceal the detestation you experienced, and confess a love which you *felt not*, and *could not* feel.

But let us pursue another train of thought. In the discussion of a previous proposition, it was supposed to be admitted that the truly pious disciples of every communion discover at least one attribute of the Supreme Being which they could wish to modify. Can any man experience a perfectly cordial love of any principle which he admits may be changed for the better? Nay, *simply to conceive* of such change for the better, is to admit the existence of something abhorrent to the soul—and that which is abhorrent it is utterly impossible to love.

Besides: there are no really pious believers in the eternity of wo, who desire that this supposed doom may be realized. The utmost they contend for is this: "*If it be God's will*, let it be done." But they concede that they should rather discover, at the last, that such is *not* His will. They hence admit that, in their apprehension, there is some quality in God which they *would* alter if they *could*—and herein they confess that they *do not*, that they *can not*, fulfil the

first and great commandment. For, however ardently they may love the Lord because of the displays of His goodness, they cannot love Him with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind.

But shall I charge the multitudes of our Christian brethren with hypocrisy? I should be sorry to do so, yet I should be compelled to this unpleasant censure, were it not that the frightful dogmas and absurdities aforesaid, are practically so remote from the injunction of the heavenly law, as seldom to be considered in the same connexion. The love of Christ is the prevailing theme. His willingness to suffer and die for the salvation of the sinner is enlarged upon with touching pathos, and the heart is unthinkingly inclined to obedience. But could the minds of men uniformly contemplate, either the malignity which could design, or the imbecility which could permit, the infliction of eternal torture, the Divine love which is disposed to redeem from endless wo, would be lost in abhorrence of a principle which could allow *the possibility* of that doom, under any circumstances whatever. And could mankind but realize *the abomination of a creed which demands undissembled love on pain of unmingled hatred*, there would be neither hazard nor injustice in uttering the charge of hypocrisy against every profession of affection for the author of such a monstrous government.

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not question the piety of our Christian brethren: I do not impugn their motives: I do not doubt that they are the means of converting many sinners and comforting many saints—but I deny that the cardinal principle of their theory ever was the instrument of producing conver-

sion, or of inducing spiritual obedience, or of administering comfort to the soul. On the contrary, I contend that *so far* as the cardinal principle referred to *is operative*, the heart is steeled against the influence of the Holy Ghost, and the affections must lie dormant under the condemnation of the letter that killeth.

But *we* have received a more excellent ministry. It is the *most* excellent ministry. It is the ministry of reconciliation. It displays our God in Christ, reconciling a world of lapsed intelligences to Himself. We cannot conceive any desirable quality which He does not possess; and hence, if we love Him not with the whole heart and soul and mind, the fault must not be attributed to our theory, but to our non-appreciation of its excellency and power. Despite the absurdity and abomination of an adverse creed, and its natural tendency to subvert every thing holy, there are many pious persons who defend it in sincerity; and notwithstanding the grandeur of the doctrine we believe and proclaim, there are some in our midst who manifest few of the graces of the Christian life. Neither of these classes is under the dominion of the doctrinal tenets to which adherence is professed. While, therefore, we pray that the former may be so enlightened in mind as to behold Our Father in Heaven as He is, let us also pray that the latter may be so quickened in spirit as to acquire that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

Nay, let us strive to make of the prayer a thing personal to ourselves, that so individual experience may become a collective example, and confirm our eulogium of the word of life.

LET US PRAY.

O LORD our Salvation, whose goodness and mercy have continually followed us: Grant us Thy helpful grace, that our souls may continually follow *Thee*. Enable us to make religion the daily experience of our lives. May the morning be ordered in prayer, that the noon may be passed in praise, and the evening in peace.

And when the evening of life shall fade away into the night of death, may we trustfully look for the morning of Thy glory, in a day without night, and a life without end. *Amen*.

JOY AND PEACE.

BY REV. ABEL C. THOMAS. SCRIPTURE LESSON, PSALM LXXXIV.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.
ROMANS XV. 13.

THERE is no fact more clearly set forth in the New Testament than this: The Christian Ministry filled the soul of the believer with joy and peace. Reliance on the God of Hope was sealed by the perfect love which expels the fear that hath torment; and the conviction of reason so blended with the yearning of prayer, that the disciples enjoyed and exhibited the blessedness of a harmonious life.

I shall endeavor to illustrate these facts, in a form supplementary to a former discourse—not doubting that the argument will confirm the excellency of the Ministry of Christian Universalism.

Mankind, in all ages and climes, have anxiously sought such an assurance of acceptance with God as would give to the soul tranquillity and peace. The history of the heathen nations is full of illustrations of this fact, and the records of ancient Israel present many corresponding examples. And since a people blessed with the light of a partial revelation, were so far deluded as to burn their sons and daughters with fire to propitiate the favor of heaven, it need not be matter of astonishment that nations to whom inspira-

tion had not extended a single ray of truth, should also violate every affection of humanity to secure the favor of the Divinity.

When our blessed Lord appeared among men, he revealed the Creator, Lawgiver and Judge of mankind as the Universal Parent, and so represented the character and purposes of Our Father in Heaven as to leave man nothing to deplore, and nothing to ask, as pertaining to His perfections and designs. In this way, he sought to produce that perfect love of God which would expel the fear that hath torment and fill the heart with peace. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew xi. 28–30. Multitudes accepted the proffered invitation, and entered into rest. They rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. They had found the pearl of great price. They possessed the white stone of the Apocalypse, on which a new name was inscribed, and they sung the new song of redemption and love.

But corruption gradually entered into the church. The light of the New Jerusalem became dim, and darkness pervailed in the heritage of Immanuel. Then began the people to seek for peace, but the Spiritual Shekinah was obscured, and they groped in gloom. Fearful spectres, the offspring of their own depraved imaginations, affrighted them, and desolation came down upon them in all its deepening horrors. And they built Tophet, not in the valley of Hinnom, as in the olden time, but in eternity; and in order to

escape the fancied agonies of the next world, they submitted to every description of real evil in this.

> "O where shall rest be found,
> Rest for the weary soul,"

was the language of every heart. Monasteries and nunneries were erected, and men and women immured themselves away from the beauties of the glorious earth, and caves and dungeons became the habitations of many, who sought the mercy of a God whose favor could only be secured in sackcloth and ashes. Learned men declared the conditions of peace, and multitudes labored in the appointed way—but they labored in vain.

The era of the Reformation arrived—but not the era of deliverance from the fear of death. Absolute election was proclaimed—but it failed of success because of its limitation of the Holy One of Israel. Free-grace was resorted to—but its avowed inefficiency only mocked the hopes which at first were excited by the plausible plan. More than two centuries have elapsed, and still the cry is, "O where shall rest be found—Rest for the weary soul!"

We answer, It is found in that most excellent ministry which testifies the destruction of death and the salvation of man. The witnesses slain for the record of eternal life, again stand upon their feet. The ancient testimony is revived, and "Salvation to the ends of the earth!" is the annunciation of the Evangelists of our God.

Blessed are they who hear the joyful sound. They walk in the light of Thy countenance, O Lord. They enjoy the communion of the Comforter, even the

Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot as yet receive. They are delivered from the bondage of the fear of death. They have exchanged ashes for beauty, and mourning for the oil of joy. Instead of being bowed beneath the spirit of heaviness, they are clothed with the garment of praise, and the fir-tree and the myrtle-tree wave their branches in triumph over the brier and the thorn.

There needs not a very curious inquiry to discover the reason why all partial systems fail to give peace to the soul. An evil of the most awful kind is, in the first instance, imagined; and then it is conjectured that deliverance therefrom should be the chief concern of man. But after all conceivable efforts, there is still a doubt as to the result; and even were it possible to obtain positive personal assurance in the premises, there would be uncertainty in relation to the fate of all others — and this uncertainty, especially to one who loves his neighbor as himself, must be so productive of distress as to poison all the fountains of enjoyment. Those who can resolve their whole duty into selfishness, may possibly care little for others, provided themselves are safe; but no one who is properly exercised by the Christian spirit, can absolve himself from an abiding interest in the immortal welfare of every human soul. And if it be realized, that only *one* individual of our race shall ever be consuming and yet never consumed in the glowing elements of divine wrath, it is impossible for rest to be enjoyed. And in vain is the ministry of the letter resorted to for relief. This is the cause of the agony. THIS *cannot*

"Minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And purge the conscience of the perilous stuff
That preys upon the heart."

No—it requires the more excellent ministry of the better covenant established upon better promises, to cast out the Tormentor, and to introduce the Comforter. It requires the revelation of God in the relation of Our Father in Heaven, to give to the mind the ground-work of abiding confidence and unutterable rejoicing. *This* admits of no doubting, no sinking of the heart in despair. *This* unveils the glorious consummation, when universal humanity, redeemed from the bondage of corruption, "shall rejoice, no wanderer lost, a family in heaven."

An apostle, in discoursing of the terrific annunciation from "the mount that burned with fire," declares that they who heard the voice "entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more;" and "so terrible was the sight" of blackness and darkness and tempest, that even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." Heb. xii. 18–21. If temporal judgments and horrors produced such fearful effects in the times of old, we need not marvel that an apprehension of infinite evils should shatter the mind, and make the wreck a witness of the reign of terror; and our only cause for astonishment is, that so few of the professed believers in endless wo manifest a suitable sense of their awful danger.

St. Paul, in another place, testifies that "Moses put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is

abolished." 2 Cor. iii. 13. There is a corresponding veil over the face of multitudes of Christians. Our blessed Saviour "abolished death," and we have the assurance that "death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed"—but our brethren cannot stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished; and, hence in supposing the eternal reign of the last enemy of man, they are all their life-time subject to bondage through fear of death.

But blessed be God, the veil is taken away in Christ, whose more excellent ministry confers the full assurance of faith and hope, that whether we live, we live unto the Lord who died for us, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord who lives for us for ever!

"And darkness and doubt now are fleeing away—
No longer we mourn in conjecture forlorn;
So breaks on the traveler, faint and astray,
The bright and the balmy effulgence of morn.

"See truth, love and mercy, in triumph descending,
And nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom!
On the cold cheek of death, smiles and roses are blending,
And beauty immortal awakes from the tomb!"

Let us now consider how thoroughly the excellency of Universalism is acknowledged, in the better moments, and also in the heart-spoken concessions, of multitudes of people who profess an adverse faith.

We are not disposed to be hypercritical, but when we hear, as an objection to our distinguishing sentiment, that "it is too good to be true," we are constrained to infer that, even in the judgment of the objector, our ministry is more excellent than his, and

that it belongs to a better covenant, established on better promises. Were we to object to the doctrine of endless wo, in any of its bearings or results, that "it is too good to be true," our opposing brethren would be amazed beyond measure, and would conclude that we therein designed to reproach them in mockery! No—we allege that *it is too* BAD *to be true.* Believing God to be essential love, we can conceive of no evil principle in His nature, no evil purpose in His plan, no ultimate evil in His government. Consequently, no doctrine can be too good to be true.

"Could we with ink the ocean fill,
Were the whole earth of parchment made,
Were every single stick a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade:
To write the love of God above,
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky!"

Our uniform testimony is, We desire to entertain the most exalted, the most glorious, the most honorable conceptions of the Supreme Being. There is nothing adorable in mere power, nothing lovely in mere knowledge, nothing amiable in mere wisdom—but love possesses every adorable, and lovely, and amiable attribute. Show to us more glorious conceptions of this heavenly principle than we already entertain, and we will embrace them with a thousand thanks. But we cannot retrograde. In so doing, we should turn our faces from the sun, and walk in darkness. We wish to go forward. We wish to stand upon the line, where the sun is vertical, and where there is no shadow. Give us something *better*, or ask

us not to change. Give us something *more excellent*, if you *can*, but ask us not to discard a sentiment which you consider too good to be true.

In unison with the preceding acknowledgment, is the desire expressed by many persons that they could unite with us in sentiment. "O if I could only believe as *you* believe, I should be the happiest person in the world."

In one sense, this desire implies "an evil heart of unbelief," and in another sense it does *not*—for while it manifests a distrust of the goodness and promises of the Lord, it displays the involuntary workings of the Spirit which pleads with all flesh for the salvation of God. It is this Spirit which maketh intercession for us with yearnings which cannot be uttered—and to all who are sensible of its operation, the Divine prohibition is solemnly addressed, "Quench not the Spirit."

Why should any man long for the consolations of a faith which he supposes to be condemned by the Bible? The answer is at hand: There is such perfect sympathy between the chastened feelings of a mourner and the most holy faith of universal restitution, that the heart will plead for a union, despite the interdict of the head! I bless my God, that I have no desire to believe with those who limit His grace, either in extent or power. I bless His holy name, that my faith is of such a transporting character as to be sealed with the best affections of my soul; and by His blessing I will ever retain it as the crown of my rejoicing—for it is light and life, and liberty and love.

In the prayers of all pious persons for the conversion and salvation of the whole world, we discover

another implied concession of the excellency of the ministry we have obtained. It is true, many who thus pray, sometimes object to the doctrine we hold, that it is pleasing to the carnal mind—but this objection they rather design to bear against the erroneous supposition that we deny all punishment for sin, than against the final holiness and happiness of all our race. There is not a pious individual under heaven who feels any repugnance to our view of the consummation of the reign of Christ. The prospect is pleasing, and hence the prayer is offered by Christians of every communion, that the wickedness of the wicked may come to an end, and righteousness and peace prevail throughout the universe of mind.

This we regard as a most precious, though not an intentional, compliment to our faith. We consider it a confession that we have obtained a more excellent ministry than all others. Why is it that the pious believer in endless wo should refuse to pray for the truth of his doctrine? Why does he pray against his creed? Ah! my friends, his feelings have assimilated to the spirit of the Friend of publicans and sinners. His heart has approximated to the purity of those celestial beings who rejoice in the penitence of the erring children of humanity. His soul breathes the heavenly atmosphere, and is so strengthened by Divine love as to resist the assaults of a cruel theory.

Blessed be God, we have no occasion to pray against faith, nor to believe against prayer. Blessed be His holy name, we can pray as we preach, and preach as we pray; and we can heartily close both preaching and prayer with the apostolic AMEN!

Our work would not be complete without reference to the obligations and duties involved in the possession of this more excellent ministry.

Considered *merely as a theory*, the Gospel is not preferable to the Law; nor merely as an abstraction is either the Gospel or the Law any more desirable than any speculation whatever. Doctrine is valuable only so far as it tends to elevate the mind and to purify the heart; and since we believe such to be the legitimate tendency of faith in the better covenant, it behooves us to furnish the world a practical commentary on the sentiment we profess.

The world will not be convinced by abstract reasoning, nor can we be benefitted thereby. It is only by cultivating the feelings of pure devotion, and by manifesting in our lives that we are under the dominion of the truth, that we can either enjoy the peace of God ourselves, or bring others into the heavenly light. We may demolish Babylon, but we shall not thereby build up Jerusalem. We may confound our adversaries by the power of argument alone—but it requires the clearer reasoning of holiness of life, to satisfy the really conscientious man that our doctrine is of God.

It is not pretended that we are less worthy than others, less upright, less commendable in our deportment—but something more than this is required. If we believe our ministry to be more excellent than any other, we are obligated to be more heavenly-minded, more devotional in our feelings, more religious in our demeanor, more punctiliously correct in our conduct, than any other people under heaven.

And it is manifest that our faith is naturally calcu-

lated to produce these fruits of the spirit. Who is, there that can contemplate God in the relation of a loving Father, without being subdued into all the love and simplicity of a child? Who can behold the sublime glories of His Divine nature, spotless and pure, without experiencing a thrill of admiring delight? Who can scan the loveliness of His perfections and the benevolence of all His plans, without being feelingly inclined to observe His heavenly law? Who can look forward to the glorious consummation of His gracious purposes, without entering into the rest and peace of the better covenant? My brethren, *an undevout Universalist is mad.* He has not realized the excellency and power of the Spirit of Truth. He has not entered into the joy of the Lord. He is but in the outer-court, and knows not the blessedness of the New Jerusalem.

So soon as (and not before) we feel the indwelling and redeeming power of our faith, we shall be prepared to make full proof of our ministry. We shall be prepared not merely to silence but to convince the adversaries of the truth. Our weapons will be mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, and to the building up of the walls of salvation.

Blessed is he who is thus prepared to "do the work of an Evangelist," and blessed are they who hearken to the testimony and the call of the "spirit and the bride." In the heavenly unity of love, they will go on their way rejoicing. The wilderness and solitary place will be glad in their presence, and the desert will blossom as the rose. Zion will be arrayed in the habiliments of holiness. Her ministers will be

clothed with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy!

Our obligations are great, and our duty is plain. The most excellent ministry of the most holy faith has been committed to our charge, and all things are to be counted but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. Should temptation assail us, and the world present its popular inducements for swerving from the truth, the remembrance of our sublime sentiments will enable us 'to stand against the wiles of the devil,' and to unite in the testimony of a faithful soldier of the cross: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD."

LET US PRAY.

WE praise and bless Thee, O Lord, for the joy of thankfulness and devotion, and for the peace which ever flows through patience and comfort of Thy holy word.

The earth is full of the riches of Thy goodness; the gospel is full of the riches of Thy grace: and all Thy perfections, and all our blessings, meet in the commandment to love Thee with all the heart.

O let Thy mighty power descend and inspire us, that *our* spirits may become emblems of *Thine;* and endue us, we beseech Thee, with wisdom from above, that we may turn many to righteousness, and shine as the stars of the firmament for ever and ever. *Amen.*